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# A VALUABLE CARGO



▲ Nice old Atkinson possibly a Mark II with a valuable load of racing pigeons ready for the race home.

**H**aving recently watched the film *1917* – about two British soldiers who received seemingly impossible orders. In a race against time, they must cross over into enemy territory to deliver a message that could potentially save 1,600 of their fellow comrades during the First World War – this superb black and white picture reminded me that pigeons played an important part in both World Wars. They were utilised by the American, German, French, Australian and UK forces. Many won awards specifically the PDSA Dickin medal which was instituted in 1943 in the UK by Maria Dickin to honour the work of animals in the Second World War. Thirty-two pigeons won this award.

In France, a pigeon named Cher Ami was awarded the Croix de Guerre medal, despite being badly injured, she managed to fly 25 miles to deliver a message that saved 194 men of the Lost Battalion of the 77th Infantry Division in the Battles of the Meuse-Argonne in 1918.

In this country, a ceremony was held in Buckingham Palace to commemorate a platoon of pigeons that braved the battlefields of Normandy to deliver vital plans to Allied forces on the edge of Germany.

In my past life working for a publisher in Horncastle, I recall they printed a newspaper on racing pigeons and I remember prices for top birds were pretty high. So I looked online at the 'top price paid

for a racing pigeon' and it came up with this. A pigeon sold for a record-breaking \$1.4 million in China in March 2019.

A chap I worked with some 30 years ago used to shoot pigeons for a farmer, just to help safeguard his crops and he'd shoot anything up to 40 a day and get paid 50p a piece from a local butcher. Now you wouldn't want to shoot a racing pigeon would you?

Enjoy the mag.

*Charlie Waters*

**CHARLIE WATERS,**  
Editor

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# LIVING THE DREAM

Dave Watson is naturally very proud to have been involved in restoring a brace of head turning classics on behalf of his boss Harry Lawson. However, that lengthy involvement awoke the realisation that Dave's own dream project would be bringing back to life the type of Dodge K1050 four-wheel tipper his father John first drove back in the late '60s. He tells Bob Tuck how he had flown half way round the world to Hawaii to 'discover' exactly what he was looking for.

**I**t was the holiday of a lifetime. To celebrate their 40th wedding anniversary, in October '17, Dave and Liz Watson flew out via Las Vegas (and returned via San Francisco) to enjoy two weeks in the Pacific islands of Honolulu and Maui. Things don't come more magical than seeing the likes of Hawaii but to Dave, the main reason he'll never forget this trip was it also led to him finding his dream machine.

As a youngster, he had ridden with his dad (John) on many occasions in a Dodge K1050 four-wheel tipper which was a great revenue earner for the family haulage firm of Watson

Bros. Dave recalls the many joyous hours he spent polishing the great little load carrier and while it eventually ended its days (like many other commercial vehicles) being cut up for scrap, it left an indelible mark on his memory.

True, as fleet engineer of the Broughty Ferry based haulier Harry Lawson Ltd, in recent years he's got a huge amount of pleasure in bringing back to life both a '68 Atky eight-wheel tanker and a '53 Albion Chieftain flat. But both these demanding projects had been on behalf of his boss 'Young Harry' and Dave

▼ Dave demonstrates how the tipping gear operates on the restored Dodge. He tells us that his father's Dodge actually had a front-mounted twin-ram set up.

felt that it was perhaps time to carry out such a restoration project – but just for himself.

That desire prompted him to put out the word that he was searching for such a late '60s Dodge K1050 16 tonner and it was in Hawaii that such a vision appeared. True, that was just an image on his mobile phone that had been sent all the way from Scotland by his good mate Brian Robertson. But it also came with the text that Brian had 'sort of' bought this Dodge already – on Dave's behalf.

No surprise our man could hardly wait to fly back home to see what was waiting for him. It's also no surprise to learn that Dave (and not forgetting Liz) have since spent almost every second of their off-duty time in bringing back to life this Watson Bros replica.

And what a fantastic job they – and many others – have achieved. You betcha.

## The Watson Five

There were to be five Watson brothers – Alex, Jim, George, John and Willie – involved in the haulage business that was to bear their name. The firm was to be based in Broughty Ferry which (now) is something of an eastern suburb to the mass of nearby Dundee.

However, before the brothers





▲ Seen in 1954, Dave's elder sister Edna is in their father's arms. Willie is sat in the cab of what looks like a Bedford.

Photo: Dave Watson Collection



## Specification

Make / Model:	Dodge K1050
Chassis No:	035995
Year:	1969
Registration:	LER 311G
Engine:	Perkins 6-cylinder 6.354 of 5.8 litres 120bhp @ 2,800rpm
Gearbox:	Turner 5-speed + Eaton two-speed axle
Gross vehicle weight:	16 tons
Top speed:	60mph (cruises at 50mph)
Fuel return:	14mpg (guesstimated)



▲ Dave is seen with his dad John on a sunny Sunday afternoon in 1969. His mother Edna took the photograph as she was quite taken with how well this Watson foursome looked in the sunshine.

Photo: Dave Watson Collection

◀ Dave is behind the wheel of his dad's Dodge the day it was going to be fully signwritten. Dave recalls the headboard was transferred onto the Dodge from an old Thames Trader they had in the yard.

Photo: Dave Watson Collection

▼ This is how the Dodge arrived in Scotland after being transported north from Cambridge. Bought originally by a farmer, it only had 60,000 miles on the clock at this time.

Photo: Dave Watson Collection





▲ The Dodge had its body and tipping gear taken off before it was sold to Dave. It's seen after arriving in the Harry Lawson premises at Broughty Ferry before restoration started. Photo: Dave Watson Collection

worked closely together in transport, they all worked in the Merchant Navy as stokers during the Second World War.

Historically, the Watsons were sea-farers and Dave recalls his grandfather Alex crewed the whalers that worked out of Dundee until around 1914. The sea – and working hard – was long part of the Watson DNA, so when the Watson Five returned home after the conflict, they thought nothing of grafting away to earn a crust.

At first, the decision to start in haulage was taken just by three of them – Alex, Jim and Willie. Although describing their work as haulage is a bit of a stretch as their first load carrier was an old Humber saloon car that had the back seat removed to make space for smalls like parcels or bags of cement. In fairness, at first they didn't have a huge demand for their

services, so the brothers were still going out to sea in a boat to harvest catches out there: "Willie then got into a sort of logging / firewood business when he acquired an old saw bench," says Dave, "so in essence they were doing all sorts just to generate cash."

Their combined income eventually stretched to the purchase of their first proper wagon in 1949: "It was a Bedford flat which had been used on a Perthshire estate while the second vehicle – another Bedford – was an ex Army vehicle. They were to convert one of these to work as a tipper although of course that only tipped off when you hand-wound the screw mechanism."

By 1953, the brothers had the chance to expand by taking on the small local firm Broughty Carriers so the fleet increased to five: "At the time," says Dave, "my dad was working

on the railways. But this expansion allowed him and George to come into the business as all five of them then had a vehicle to drive." Dave recalls the business was then actually run by a Mrs Aitkin who had been part of the operation prior to the Watson take-over.

In the late '50s, the Dundee area was a mass of activity and while Watson Bros. were just a small fish in the huge transport pond, their mantra of working hard meant the future was looking very bright. That all changed however, when on 8th December 1959, George – and the rest of the crew – was killed when he went out on the lifeboat 'Mona.' Apparently a lightship had broken away from its moorings and the lifeboat was called out to go to its aid. When they got the call, George actually took the place of his father Alex – who was there ready to go out -- but the Mona was lost in heavy seas



▲ Dave's wife Liz is seen on one of the many times when she was applying paint. She was to be a great help in the Dodge's restoration. Photo: Dave Watson Collection



▲ The Motor Panels cab required attention to the rot in its floor pan and strange accident damage to both its front corners. Photo: Dave Watson Collection



▲ Still a long way to go but Dave received a huge boost once he had the first bit of signwriting to admire.

*Photo: Dave Watson Collection*

while attempting this rescue.

It's more than 60 years since this incident occurred but it's naturally still an open sore in the Watson memory.

## Dodge Around

With Dave being born in 1957, his first early memories of riding with his dad (whenever he could) come from the mid '60s when the four Watson brothers were buying newer vehicles and even going onto long distance. An Albion – with Gardner engine – was bought from the famous Aberdeen haulier of Charlie Alexander and its licence allowed the brothers to set their sights of delivering all the way to London: "The brothers would take turns of who drove this Albion," says Dave, "although Willie did most of this distance work. Rolls of jute were a regular traffic while for back loads, the Albion carried a lot of machinery which went into the construction of the big Blue Circle cement plant that was built at Dunbar."

1965 was a big year for Watsons as they bought their first ever brand new tipper – a Bedford TK – while a new KM came soon after. Fondest memory for Dave, however, was the arrival of his dad's next wagon – KMS 589E – the two-year-old Dodge K1050 four-wheel tipper that had been new to Riley Bros, a Bannockburn based brick haulier: "It had the Ebro twin-ram tipping gear and quite a high sided body. These sides were lowered a bit and it was then used on all sorts of work."

For the next four years or so, Dave, his dad and this Dodge were an inseparable trio (as much as schooling allowed of course) and Dave recalls spending a lot of time in the driving seat whenever they were in the quarry or other private property. He loved it.

He was of course too young to legally drive heavies, so when leaving school – in '73 – he was given a start in the garage at the huge Harry Lawson haulage concern. Dave always thought that once he had found his feet with the spanners, he would of course come back to the Watson business and perhaps start full-time driving one of the motors – but that was destined never to happen. Watson Bros did expand to a 10 strong operation after they took on the drummed oil distribution work that had been started by W Sturrock of Forfar: "We had premises on the other side of the Tay just for that traffic," says Dave.

The Watson business was to close in '86: "I



▲ The Geddes Group at Arbroath came up trumps in producing a suitable tipping body for the Dodge. The chassis of the four wheeler had to be extended slightly to make a good fit.

*Photo: Dave Watson Collection*



▲ Dave took the Dodge to 'As Fab' who devised this framework to support an outer skin to the body and so create a period look. *Photo: Dave Watson Collection*



▲ It was perhaps fitting that Brian Robertson did the final signwriting on Dave's Dodge as Brian had been responsible for the finding of this four wheeler in the first place.

*Photo: Dave Watson Collection*



▲ Back behind the wheel of the Dodge is a magical experience for Dave. He says it's great to re-hear that Perkins engine sound of old.

suppose all the brothers were getting on then and my dad was suffering from bad health. About '82 ther'd been a fire which badly damaged part of the premises they had then – Carbet Castle – and I think that had knocked the stuffing out of everyone."

Things were finally all sold off although Dave's wife Liz tells us that one of the ceilings – from the Carbet Castle house – was of such great artistic merit and value that it was transferred to the Barrack Museum in Dundee.

No such fate for Dave's beloved Dodge K1050 which had been shoved into the corner of the yard once its working life had ended. Dave believes that after the sell-up, it was simply broken up and scrapped – although, of course, it was never completely forgotten about.

## From Cambridge To Tayside

We can imagine it was a strange plane ride for Dave and Liz back to the UK in '17 from the middle of the Pacific as even with the plane flying at more than 500mph, Dave probably

wished it could go a bit faster. Getting in touch with Brian meant he was assured that the Dodge was complete and a runner; "It was one of two similar K1050s that were new to GH Carter of Rectory Farm, Dry Drayton near Cambridge."

This duo had just been bought by Morris Leslie who has a massive vintage / classic collection on Errol airfield near Perth of all manner of vehicles and equipment: "Brian told me that Morris didn't want to sell the tipping gear or body on 'my' Dodge as he had it earmarked to go straight onto another vehicle of his. But I felt that getting replacements to fit a four-wheeler shouldn't be a problem. And as soon as I had a good look at it and a short run up the old runway at Morris' place, I knew this would be an ideal restoration motor for me."

After waiting something like 30-35 years for such a Dodge to come back into his life, Dave had a roller-coaster of emotions after striking the deal. He was of course happy with the sale but then all the practical logistical problems



▲ Dave's dad always used to display the figure of a Scottish piper on the front of his Dodge so of course, Dave has one on his.

he had to answer came to mind. Morris was good enough to arrange for the cab and chassis to be transported from Errol to Dundee but it was to be Dave's boss – Harry Lawson – who immediately eased a lot of Dave's concern, as he immediately gave Dave the green light for him to do the Dodge's restoration on the Lawson Broughty Ferry premises: "That permission was a huge relief to me – and I don't know how I would have managed doing it elsewhere." Thanks boss.

## Getting The Job Done

It might be hard to believe, but the transition from a so-so barn find to a stunning replica of a '60s Dodge work horse took less than two years to complete. As we said, Dave poured almost every second of his off-duty time into the job and while there was no big hurry, the man himself set this 'Let's get it done soonest' deadline on himself. And what a fantastic job he's brought about.

Lots of others have contributed to this cause and first – of the many – thanks goes to his wife Liz who has helped hugely in both a practical and supporting fashion. Liz recalls first meeting Dave in 1976 at the Friday night disco at the Tay Centre Hotel in Dundee's Whitehall Place. Actually Liz turned down Dave's first request for a dance back then but he – of course – didn't let that put him off and they were married

▲ First show for the Dodge to attend was the July '19 event held at Glamis Castle. No surprise it was lined up alongside Harry Lawson's stunning Atkinson and Albion classics. Dave had a huge amount of input into the restoration of these two vehicles of Harry's.

Photo: Dave Watson Collection



within a year or so.

Between them, Dave and Liz got to know every square inch of the Dodge K1050. On his first inspection – at Morris Leslie's in Errol – Dave picked out the rot in the floor pan of the Motor Panels cab but he knew Andy Stewart and the lads at 'As Fab' (AS Fabrication) could work wonders with that. With the Dodge being the third of Dave's restorations, he felt easier having the contacts (and know-how) picked up when doing the Atkinson and Albion projects. So, no surprise, the services of Rab Lawson – with the electrics – were again utilised.

Again Dave also wants to mention a few guys from the Harry Lawson garage – Davy Lane, Nathan Mills and Wullie Drummond – who helped out on the Dodge after they had finished work. Although the Dodge was a runner, Dave decided to take the engine out and have a look inside – and he was pleased he did so: "When I looked in, the exhaust ports were full of grain."

Although ending up doing a full recondition to the Perkins 6.354 engine, this is almost a routine job for our mechanical wizard who replaced the clutch as well. The gearbox and Eaton two-speed rear axle were both fine.

A major concern for Dave was in finding a suitable tipper body for the Dodge but it was to be the Arbroath based Geddes Group who came up trumps with this: "As luck would have it," says Dave "they recalled how my dad used to do sub-contract work for them back when he had the Dodge so they were very keen to help." If anything, the body they came up with looked a shade too modern. And it was to be 'As Fab' (again) who designed a framework to support a sort of outer skin to ensure the Geddes body then had a period look. And it was to be Ron Gardiner who then extended the Dodge's chassis and made everything fit. Nice one.

Of course any restoration project also requires all manner of 'tricks of the trade' and visits to the internet to find little bits and pieces like a new throttle pedal and speedo' cable.

## Back On The Road

We mentioned how Dave's good friend Brian Robertson was to be the original 'finder' of the Dodge so it was perhaps fitting how Brian was also its 'finisher.' Using his life-long talents with paint brushes of all sizes, the period signwriting he produces is a clear indicator how this work is obviously a labour of love for this talented Scot.

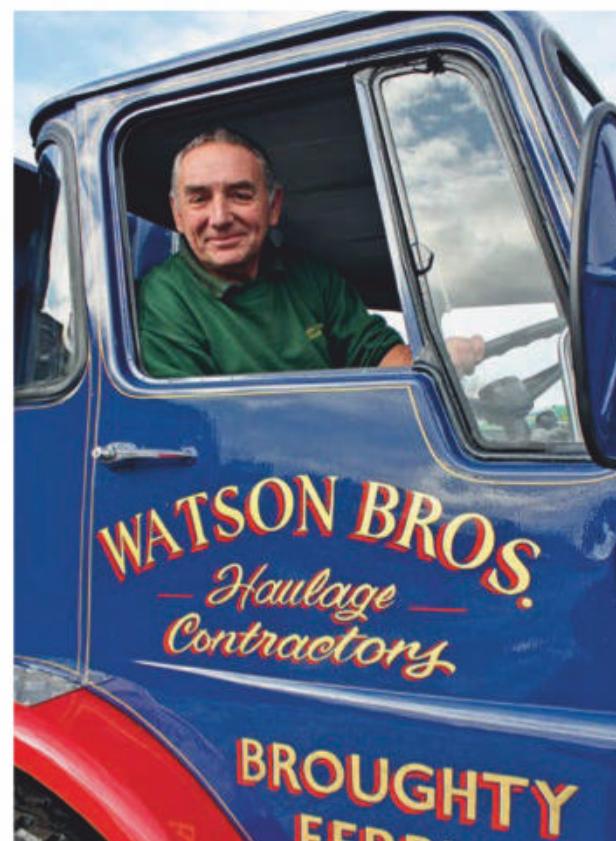
However, before legally getting back on the tarmac, Dave also needed the services of the Strathmore Vintage Vehicle Club Ltd. They were to be the conduit to getting the DVLA at Swansea to agree the Dodge could retain the LER 311G registration it first started out with. Thanks guys.

The Strathmore club is based at Glamis and it was to be in the famous Castle grounds where the Dodge made its first appearance in July '19. And fittingly again, on the showground it was to be lined up alongside the dynamic Lawson duo of Atkinson eight-wheel tanker and Albion Chieftain flat.

Naturally Dave was filled with an element of trepidation in that first 15 mile run to Glamis Castle as every squeak, bang, whine and growl coming from the freshly energised Dodge was



▲ We love Dave's extra attention to detail in adding a sheet to the tipper body but which – in typical fashion – is rolled up tight against the front of the body. Great stuff.



▲ When you check some of the first shots of the restored Dodge you will note a variance in grille colours. At first Dave painted this red, but when checking period shots of his Dad's vehicle, he re-painted it silver to match the earlier vehicle.

◀ Dave may have time to smile now but it's been an intense couple of years for himself; his wife Liz and their many helpers.



▲ In the late '60s, the four-wheel tipper was the standard work horse for many local operations like Watson Bros. However, 50 years later, companies like Dundee Plant now operate eight-wheel rigid as their tipper preference.



▲ The Dodge K1050 has a very easy access cab. The levers on the floor are used to operate the tipping gear.

absorbed and computed through the Watson senses. Of course every time Dave has since gone back on the road, his 'new' vehicle is shaking itself down after its 35 years or so at rest and our mechanical expert owner has given attention in the form of tweaks and adjustments as required.

▼ Being able to take the Dodge back to its old stomping ground of the back lanes surrounding Dundee brings pleasure to Dave plus many of the locals who can still recall the distinctive Watson Bros livery of old. Happy days.



▲ The Eaton two-speed axle was a big favourite for drivers in the '60s and '70s as it allowed for a very swift shift of ratio.

One cosmetic change in the last four months was to be with the grille which was re-painted silver. When first painted, Dave decided it should be red but once he closely looked at the old pictures of his dad's Dodge, he realised that silver was the appropriate colour.

It certainly looks great to us when Dave invites us back up to Broughty Ferry. And while we know – that he knows – that we always like a ride out with a vehicle, we sense a spring in the Watson step when we ask him to take us somewhere that he and his dad – and their old Dodge – used to frequent. No problem.

The K1050 has an easy to get in / get across cab with ideal steps and grab handles although once up and inside, we are immediately taken by the stunning interior: "Lizzie and Kenny Hill did the roof lining and flooring," says Dave. "And I got the seats upholstered by Tayside Upholstery in Dundee."

The Perkins 6.354 engine has a lovely sound



▲ This is the old weighbridge at the Cunmont quarry which is slowly being taken over by Mother Nature. Dave recalls how if you drove on, you had to reverse off after weighing.

to it and once on the open road we are swiftly through the five-speed box and up to speed. Dave reckons it'll do about 60mph but is happier at 50: "I think it has a lower geared two-speed than the axle ratio of my dad's old motor."

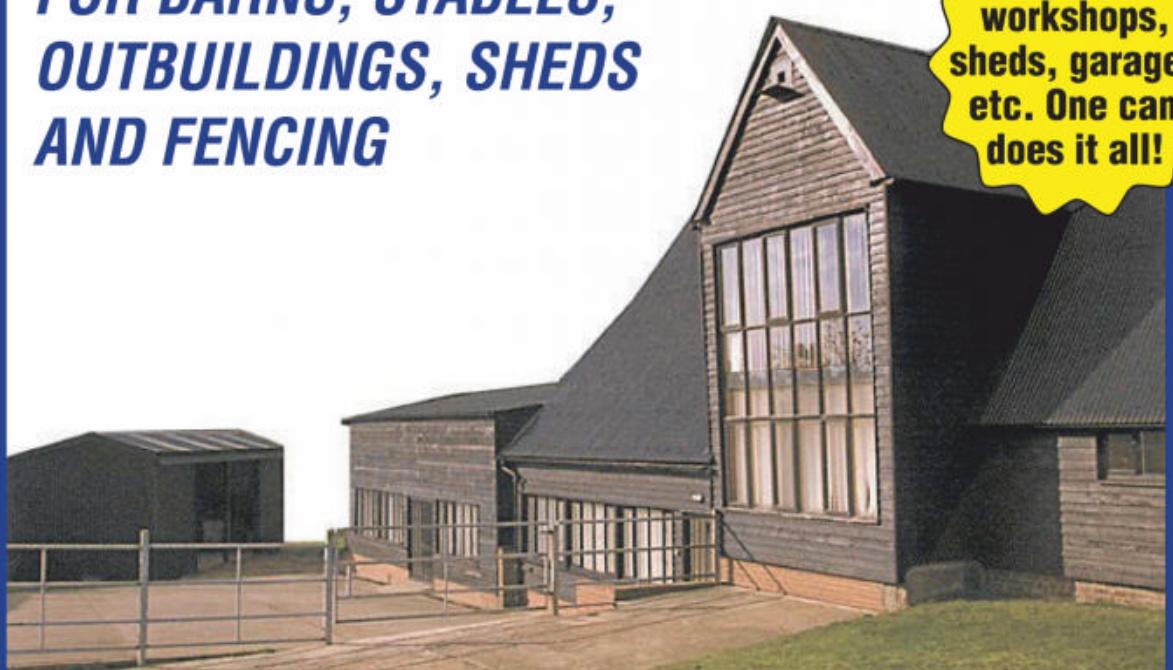
We take to the back lanes with Cunmont Quarry being our destination. It's still in – sort of – use by other companies, but back when he was a youngster, Dave recalls many visits here when the quarry was a huge hive of activity and Dodge K1050s were a regular sight on the roads round Dundee.

They were happy days indeed for D and D and D (Dave and his dad and his Dodge). But thanks – again – to the many supporters of Dave and Liz, their head turning tipper is now bringing smiles aplenty to the locals who are enjoying seeing the 'Watson Bros' name back on the road. What a dream of a vision this has turned out to be. ♦



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## ABERDEEN WESTERN PERIPHERAL ROUTE ROAD RUN



**A**n excellent turnout of over 30 commercial vehicles braved the rain to take part in the latest AWPR road run, writes Bob Weir. The run celebrates the recent opening of the long-overdue Aberdeen bypass. The run started at Ellon north of the city, and ended 60 miles later at Stracathro service station on the A90. The run is free to entrants and is proving to be a big success. The next run is scheduled for May 2020. Images from the run were kindly supplied by Evan Michael.

Further information: Stuart Walker 07831841024

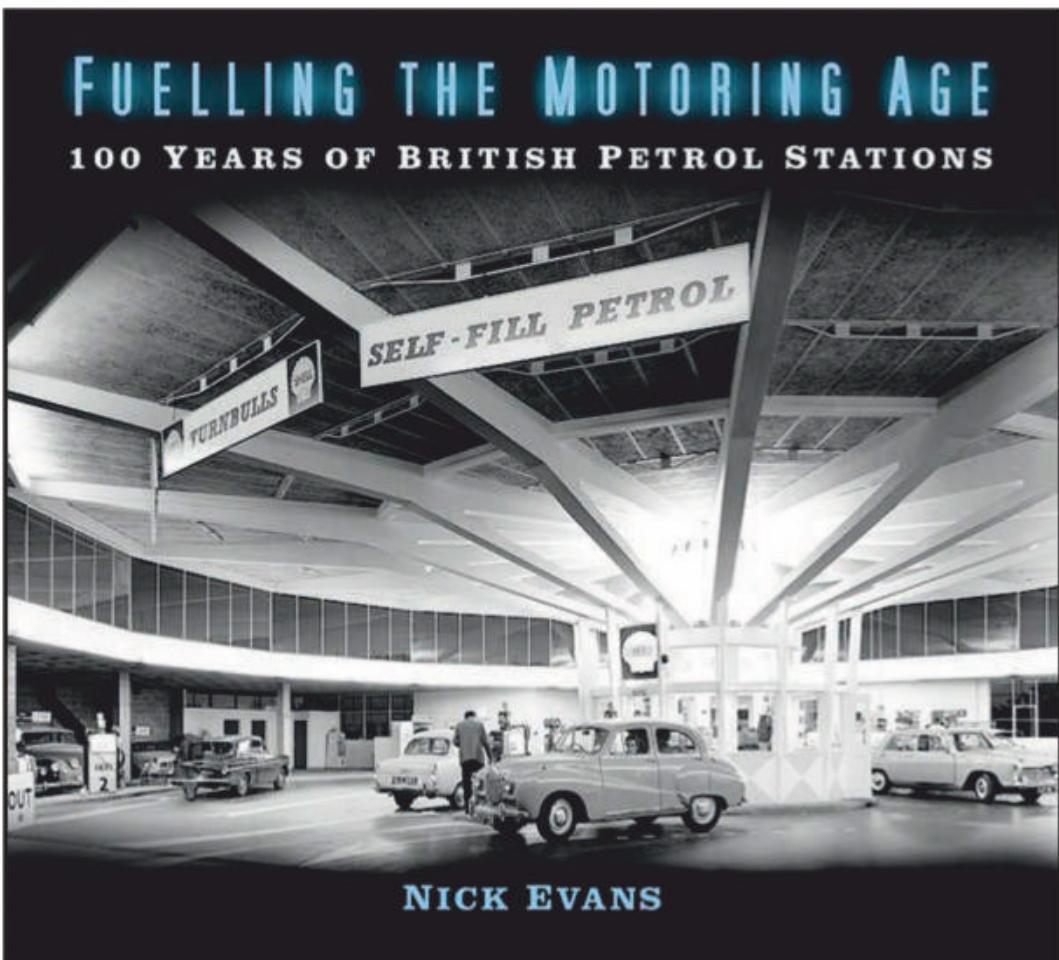
## FUELLING THE MOTORING AGE

**P**etrol stations have been with us for 100 years. They have been built on countless rural and industrial landscapes, often becoming a linchpin of the communities they serve. Men and women in slightly oily overalls would fill up your car's tank, wipe the windscreen and even check the oil for you. Football coins, Green Shield Stamps, soup bowls or wine glasses might be handed over to keep your custom – all in the days when a single £1 note was enough to buy hundreds of miles of happy motoring. This vivid, illustrated history takes the reader on a journey from collecting a tin can at the local ironmonger's to filling up on the forecourt, and on to the possibility of not using petrol at all.

A book I really enjoyed reading, in particular, the great period forecourt shots are amazing. Sadly, today these images only now live in one's mind but to see the illuminated globes on top of the pumps in all the differing company logs really is splendid. Well done to Nick Evans in getting all these pics together in one volume. If I had to pick one photograph it has to be the 'Henlys' art-deco style building depicted in Kent complete with the shell globes and used car lot, simply fantastic!

Reviewed Russ Harvey

By Nick Evans ISBN: 9780750991490 Price: £12.99 Published: by The History Press [www.thehistorypress.co.uk](http://www.thehistorypress.co.uk)



# AYRSHIRE RUN

July 11-12, 2020

For this year's event we commemorate a special name in the form of: the Bill Reid Memorial Road Run 2020

**B**ill Reid was a founder member of the original Road runs back in 1995 (part of an annual event run by the Ayrshire Vintage Truck & Bus Club), although it was then just a short run around Ayrshire prior to joining a static display with AVTMC (Ayrshire Vintage Tractor Machinery Club) annual rally at Eglington Park near Irvine. Most of you will know that Bill wrote a book a couple of years ago titled 25 Years of the Ayrshire Road run.

Bill was born on an Ayrshire farm near Maybole in 1948, educated locally while spending a lot of his time around the farm doing the usual jobs. The company of David M Reid livestock carriers operated from a farm close by which gave Bill and his cousin Allan an opportunity to experience runs out with their father and uncle who drove some of the fleet of four. There is no doubt this would be the start of Bill's connection to lorries for the



rest of his life.

On leaving school, Bill got a job with Alexander Jack of Maybole (an agricultural implement manufacturer) and in quick succession changed to John Wallace & Son in the drawing office then a short spell in the Bru Office (Unemployment Agency).

Soon after, in his late teens he was heading for a Police career first in Prestwick, then Ayr Burgh and eventually into Ayrshire Traffic Division for the next 30 years, he then became the force's driver trainer for all classes of licence for another 15 years.

During this period of unbroken employment, Bill must have spent all of his spare time taking photos of all kinds of

commercial vehicles and buses to amass his huge collection of over 200,000 photos documented in albums, CDs and loose from all over the world (This collection is now in secure archive and interested parties can contact Jim Smith to access, Tel: 07980 315932).

Bill always had time for everyone, especially if you were interested in trucks or buses, he made many friends around the UK and abroad and will be sadly missed.

I have assisted Bill and Robert for many years to deliver the outstanding Ayrshire Road run and hope you will support us in 2020 to celebrate his contribution and life to trucks in general. Images are from past runs.

Jim Smith



## NEEDING SOME WORK DONE

Seen on Sunday 12th January in the East End of Glasgow, maybe they might interest you?  
Yesterdays Classics, tomorrow's Vintage?  
Alex Saville



## CHESHIRE RUN

**C**oinciding with the FBHVC's 'Drive it Day', The Cheshire Run (90-mile circular tour of Cheshire and North Shropshire), takes place on Sunday 26th April 2020. Starting at 09.00 hrs from Lymm Truck Stop (formerly Poplar 2000 Services) the run is open to all vehicles of historical interest. Interested parties can obtain further details by e-mailing thecheshirerun@hotmail.com or calling 01925 652647.

Maurice White.

Cheshire Run organiser.



# POLES APART



▲ With electric hub traction motor drive, the LeTourneau V-22 Sno-Freighter power car/five-trailer outfit was designed, built and tested in only six weeks.

Exploration of the Antarctic continent was initially 'because it's there', and more recently in the quest for untapped mineral resources. In the regions surrounding the North Pole, things have been different. The domain for generations of Inuit hunters with dog sleds, Cold War early warning against pre-emptive nuclear strike was a key early driver of vehicular transport. Ed Burrows explores waypoints in the history of transport in the world's nether regions, starting with an over-ambitious project that pushed the bounds of never been done before engineering to the point of valiant failure.

Until a magnificent failure got Antarctic ice on its face in 1940, transport in the polar regions was quite literally a dog's life. The Inuit people of the northern extremities of North America showed the way. The type of husky-drawn sled that served them from time immemorial was borrowed by the 1911-1912 Antarctic expeditions that raced to be first to reach the South Pole. The Norwegians led by Roald Amundsen used dog sleds to claim its historic victory on 14 December 1911.

The Brits led by Scott – beaten in to second place by 34 days – used a combination of dog teams, ponies and primitive (though in their way pioneering) motorised tracked contraptions. Ponies were eventually killed and provided food for dogs.

Amundsen travelled light and kept it simple, the Brits were overloaded – and evidently not as good at working with dogs.

With your snow shoes on, best foot forward to 1939. Starship of the US expedition led by Admiral Byrd to the planet's nether regions was the Antarctic Snow Cruiser. Utterly without precedent in every respect, like something from the realms of sci-fi fantasy, it even carried – piggyback style – a ski-plane on the roof structure above the crew's living quarters.

Conceived in an age when polar exploration excited the world's newspaper headlines just as the first ventures into space did two decades later, the Snow Cruiser fell a crevasse short of doing what it said on the box. But you'd be forced to concede in no other sense was it a failure. That it was constructed at all – and in an

astonishingly brief eleven-week race against the clock – was a spectacular triumph of American can-do spirit and engineering ingenuity.

Admiral Byrd's Antarctic behemoth can be viewed as a precursor to the Space Shuttle – or a Winnebago running on 10ft diameter tyres. The driving force behind it was an earlier 1933-1935 expedition's second in command, Dr Thomas Poulter. After returning to America he took up the position of scientific director of what was then the newly established Research Foundation of the Armour Institute of Technology in Chicago.

The Armour Institute Research Foundation was the ideal home for his innovative thinking. Its *raison d'être* was to 'render a research and experimental engineering service to industry; to conduct

fundamental research for the purpose of improving our comforts of life and knowledge of science'. Snow Cruiser design work commenced in a part-time basis commenced in 1937. Over the next two years the project advanced from blue sky thinking to finalised engineering drawings. Right down to electric wheel drive with traction motor hubs, innovation was such that the brief might well have been 'do not, under any circumstances, do what anyone else had done before'.

In spring 1939, the US Government announced the decision for an Antarctic expedition to catch the next Polar summer. This necessitated departure in November of 1939. The Armour Institute Research Foundation presented the completed plans for the Snow Cruiser and the Government said yes – oblivious to the fact a vehicle that was tantamount to the re-invention of the wheel would have to be built in only three months. The timeframe would be unimaginable today – computers certainly seem to slow things down.

Literally a traveling scientific laboratory and mobile exploration base, the Snow Cruiser had an on-board machine shop, storage space for months of provisions and heated, insulated living facilities to sustain a crew of five men (and a dog).

Actual construction was undertaken by the Pullman organisation in Chicago, famous for building and operating luxury railway sleeping and dining carriages.

The scale of the construction task is only hinted at by the Snow Cruiser's whale-like weight, dimensions and capacities. Designed for operating at a gross of 37.5 tons, its overall length was 55.7ft, height was 16ft and width was an inch and a half short of 20ft. The wheelbase was 20ft; front and rear overhangs were each 17ft 10in.

It had tankage for 9,464 litres of diesel – sufficient for an estimated cruising range of 5,000 miles – together with special engine and drivetrain bearing lubricants formulated to keep things moving at 50 degrees Centigrade below zero. Befitting its role as aircraft carrier for the expedition's Beechcraft Model 17 Staggerwing five-seat bi-plane, the Snow Cruiser also carried 3,786 litres of aviation fuel.

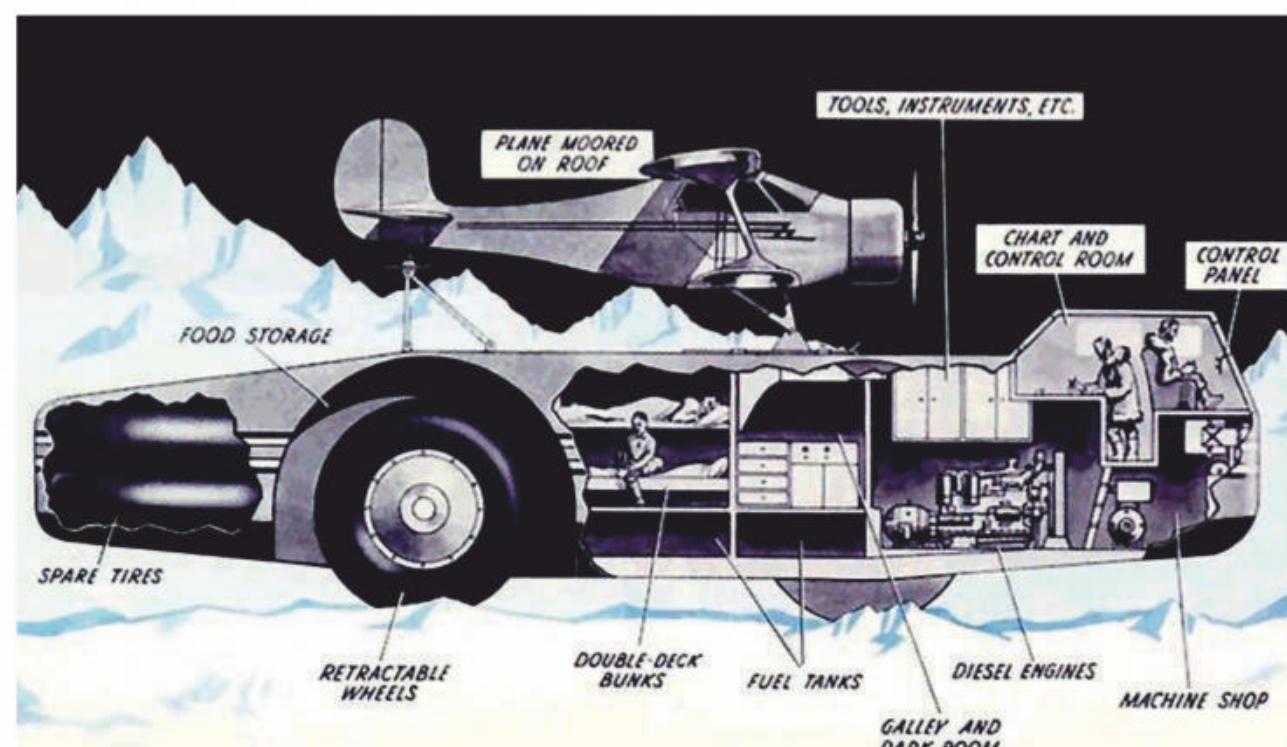
The electric welded all-steel structure comprised I-beam chassis members carrying a spaceframe sheathed in varying gauges of steel sheet. The I-beams slightly protruded from the underside to act as skids if the Snow Cruiser bottomed.

General Electric and Cummins were responsible for the diesel-electric drive system. Eliminating the space that would otherwise have been taken by a gearbox,

**“Actual construction was undertaken by the Pullman organisation in Chicago”**



▲ Built in 1939, the US South Pole expedition's Snow Cruiser was probably the world's largest pneumatic tyred vehicle built up to that time.



▲ All-in-one mobile exploration base, scientific laboratory, workshop and aircraft carrier. An on-board crane lifted the Staggerwing biplane on and off.



▲ In 1956, a pioneering convoy of 164-tonne gross Mack LRVSW tractor/65-ft trailer rigs trekked 1,500 miles over virgin territory to the fringes of the Arctic Ocean.



▲ The 1,021-mile journey from Chicago to Boston for shipment to Antarctica caused traffic hold-ups for much of the way.

propshafts and axles, drive was taken to the wheel-hub traction motors by electric cable.

Installed in an engine compartment below the ship-style chart room, a pair of naturally aspirated 112kW/150bhp, six-cylinder Cummins diesels drove a GE generator. The four hub motors were each rated at 56kW/75bhp.

The 12ply, 10ft diameter low pressure Goodyear tyres were of a type previously produced for swamp buggies used for prospecting in the Louisiana swamplands. Each tyre had a two square foot contact patch and could run at between 2.5 to 15psi inflation pressure. Though expedient given the novelty and timeframe, the decision to use tread-less rubber was to prove a serious error of judgement: the conditions encountered in Antarctica required grip the tyres simply did not possess.

All four wheels steered – with the same turn angle, or crabwise at opposite angles front and rear. To allow tobogganing across crevasses with a flat underbelly, the wheels were retractable. (The front wheels retracted until the front of the underbody was at the other side of the gap, at which point the rears were retracted and the front wheels were lowered and powered the vehicle out. That was the theory, anyway).

Leaving Chicago on 24 October, instead of the envisaged eight days, the 1,021-mile journey to Boston took nearly three weeks. Often, the road was barely wider than the Snow Cruiser. Generating massive excitement all the way, it crossed bridges with fractions to spare, and at one stage caused a 72,000-vehicle tailback. The Snow Cruiser's somewhat clumsy progress was watched by an estimated 2.5 million people. Incidents en route included a collision with a truck, hitting the corner of a bridge and careening downhill and coming to rest in the middle of a cow pasture, nose buried in a mud bank.

The Army Wharf, Boston, was finally reached on 12 November. Ooops! The Snow Cruiser was wider than the beam measurement of the expedition's ship, necessitating the removal of nine feet from the tail section that housed the two spare tyres.

Rather than in cabins on the ship, expedition members slept aboard the Snow Cruiser, and during the two-month voyage were kept busy installing equipment there had been no time to fit before.

Although the distance from the ledge of sea ice where the Snow Cruiser disembarked was not great, its deficient mobility was soon found out. To improve traction, the spare tyres were fitted to the front wheels and chains to the rears. Never

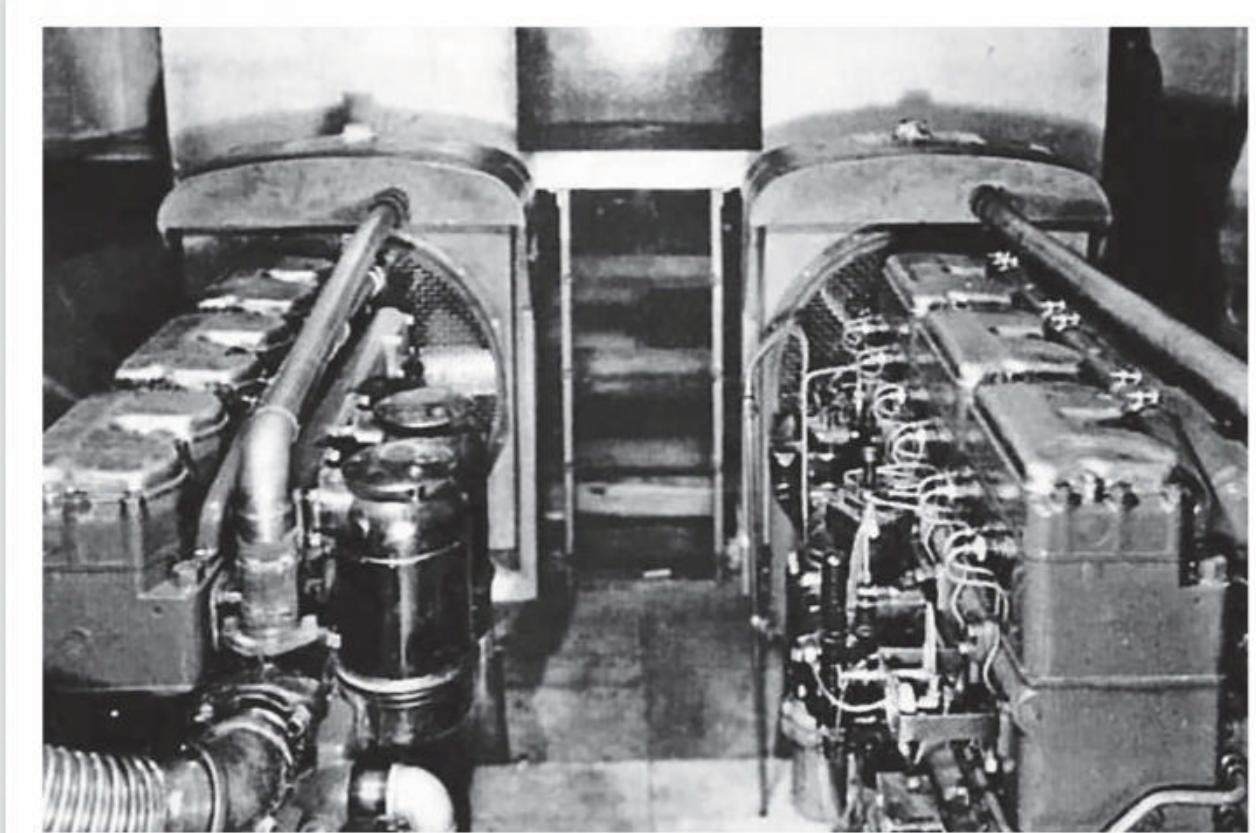
“The DEW Line, one of the Cold War's biggest single defence projects”

performing as hoped, the Snow Cruiser was finally parked near one of the base camps and used as living quarters, never to move again. In late 1940, the expedition itself was abandoned, a year before America entered the Second World War.

For operation in the polar regions, which is best, wheels or tracks? And big wheels with electric drive – or more conventional transmissions tyres? History records 1955 as the year each of these was put to the test.

In the Antarctic, exploration got going again, with a highly successful expedition jointly mounted by the UK, the US, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. Four-track Sno-Cats were the primary mode of transport. Built by the US Tucker Sno-Cat Corp of Oregon, power was provided by a 180bhp, 5.4litre, twin-carburettor Chrysler Hemi V8. Today, Tucker continues to build bonneted and cab-forward evolutions of its original four-track design.

Again in 1955, following earlier tests with proof-of-concept vehicles, a new-generation diesel-electric leviathan with hub-motor drive – the LeTourneau V-22 Sno-Freighter – set forth, this time northbound towards the fringes of the Arctic Ocean. Operated by Alaska Freight Lines under contract to the US military, its mission was delivering material to Distant Early Warning radar chain construction sites. The DEW Line, one of the Cold War's biggest single defence projects, all told employed an estimated 25,000 people working in the



▲ The engine bay's twin Cummins diesels – combined 300bhp output – drove a General Electric generator set from which power was fed to the electric hub motors.

electronics, civil engineering, construction and transportation sectors. The chain comprised some 60 radar units stretching 3,000 miles across Alaska and Northern Canada – and extending to Greenland, the Faeroes and Iceland. It roughly followed the 69th parallel, nearly 200 miles inside the Arctic Circle.

Thanks to Texan earthmoving plant innovator RG LeTourneau's modular custom-build engineering techniques and flexible manufacturing system, the VC-22 was designed, fabricated and tested in only six weeks. The structure was all-welded, steel and to save weight, wherever possible, aluminium. Comprising a four-wheel power car and five 25-ton payload, 40ft long, four-wheeled trailers, it ran on 88in diameter/38in tread width tyres. Overall train length was 274ft. The power car's twin 400bhp Cummins units powered an LeT combined AC/DC genset, from which power was taken to the VC-22's 24 wheel-hub traction motors. The power car's living and sleeping accommodation provided for a crew of four. The coupling system was designed so that despite five trailers, the rig left only one set of wheel tracks.

The Sno-Freighter ran on a 400-mile trail, pre-prepared by a team of Caterpillar D8 bulldozers. The trail was subsequently widened, and easy going enough for a convoy of 32 Kenworth linehaul outfits to make the trip.

A construction schedule requiring the DEW Line to go live only three and a half years after it was conceived also demanded other transportation resources. Most impressive was a fleet of eleven specially built Mack LRVSW tractors hauling 65ft long semi-trailers. In this instance, the convoy's 1,500-mile trail largely through virgin landscapes was blazed by its own bulldozers travelling immediately ahead.

Alaska Freight Lines was again the contractor. The overarching consideration was beating the 1956 spring thaw. Surface conditions dictated the haul was only feasible in winter, for the reason that, during the spring thaw, the tundra – the area roughly between the tree line and the 75th parallel – becomes an impassable bog of grasses, sedges, lichens, and willow shrubs.

The LRVSWs were ordered in November 1955. Mack's engineers pulled all the stops out. Nine weeks after the order was placed, moved by rail, the trucks reached Alaska Freight Lines' Seattle base, 2,500 miles from the Bulldog's manufacturing plant in Allentown, Pennsylvania.

The tractors were the prime mover derivative of Mack's 34-ton payload LRVSW 6x4 off-highway dump truck. Between 1954 and 1961, Mack built a total of 209 LRVSWs – so, rare beasts, though few other trucks boasted 600bhp at the time.

The LRVSW tractor unit weighed in at 22 tons. Its main dimensions were: length 27.5ft; wheelbase 16.8ft; front track 8.3ft. Overall width across the extremities of



▲ Colour photos was in their infancy in 1939. This may have been processed in the kitchen-cum-darkroom. The Snow Cruiser was wider than the ship's beam. Once on board, the tail section had to be cut off.



◀ The 600bhp of the LRVSW was almost unprecedented for a truck 65 years ago – and still pretty awesome today.



▲ The LRVSW 6x4s were moved 2,500 miles by rail from Mack's Allentown factory to Alaska Freight Lines base in Seattle.



▲ Get out of that! It did – but everything had to be unloaded from the trailer when a rig got stuck.

the rear tyres, 11.5ft. Height to the top of the cab was 10.8ft. The chassis was an all-welded tapered-frame structure utilising wide-flange, 14.25in deep I-beam main members for maximum torsional rigidity.

Power was provided by a 28-litre Cummins VTA28 turbocharged V12 diesel, a 400 V design developing maximum outputs of 600bhp and 1,600lb/ft. Transmission was through a Mack two-lever manual shift Duplex gearbox with eight forward speeds and two reverse.

Drive was taken to a Mack Planidrive dual reduction axle bogie with inter-axle and differential power dividers. The rear suspension system incorporated upper and lower semi-elliptic spring packs and allowed both axles a maximum upwards travel of 9in. Suspension of the undriven front axle was by semi-elliptics assisted by shock absorbers. Tyres were 16.00x25s all-round, with chevron-treads and an outside diameter of 5ft. Wheels were suitably sized versions of Mack's trademark eight-spoke,

rim-bolted arrangement.

In conditions that guaranteed progress for the most part would be at crawling pace at best, a prime mover/semi-trailer combination with a specified maximum grossing of 164 tonnes traversing 1,500 miles of nowhere would inevitably require vast quantities of diesel oil. Notwithstanding a planned fuel stop 500 miles into the mission, the impossibility of refuelling at the final destination meant having to carry enough diesel for a round trip of 2,000 miles of tough going, plus adequate reserves. Ingeniously, fuel was carried in belly tanks under each trailer's load platform.

In the 1950s, the regular mode of surface transport in the Arctic region was a dog team and sled, reckoned to be capable of hauling a load of up to 200lb. Far into its 1,500-mile off-highway trek across deep frozen hell, the convoy chanced upon a lone Inuit hunter with his dogs and kills-laden sled. From the vantage point of the front step grating of one of the tractors, he surveyed the convoy's sheer scale and might. Touching the chromed Mack bulldog mascot crowning the radiator cap, he put what he was witnessing into Inuit perspective. "Many dogs", he said, "Many dogs".



▲ Shown the Mack bulldog radiator mascot, the Inuit, who'd never seen a truck before, expressed the power and scale of the convoy as "Many dogs".

“conditions that guaranteed progress for the most part would be at crawling pace at best”



▲ The Nodwell 110 began life as a five-tonner in 1957. Over six decades on, Foremost's present evolution carries a 10-ton payload.

Over and above the need for forging ahead day and night, temperatures far below freezing meant keeping the big Cummins running 24 hours a day. The only stops were for servicing, filling churns with ice or snow for fresh water and, weather permitting, mail and fresh vegetables deliveries by light aircraft. The downside to stopping meant the transmission cases had to be heated by blow torch so the gears could be shifted to get moving again.

Today, certainly for transporting medium and heavy equipment, the go-to manufacturer is Canada's Foremost. Founded in the 1960s by Bruce Nodwell and his son Jack, the company's pedigree derives from the Nodwell 110, introduced in 1957 and still in the Foremost line up alongside high flotation tyred, frame-steer 4x4s, 6x6s and 8x8s, and 2- and 4-track transporters. Payload capacities range from 10 to 40 tonnes.



▲ In the 1950s, Antarctic exploration resumed using a fleet of highly successful four-track Tucker Sno-Cats.

The original Nodwell 110 carried five tons. Its 32in wide flexible tracks – 40in wide on the 10-tonne payload current spec – ran on four pneumatic tyres on each side. Tracks running on wheels shod with pneumatic tyred remain the Foremost formula for ultimate low ground pressure mobility over terrain you wouldn't want to put your foot in. Between standing and walking, a man of average build exerts a ground pressure of between eight and 20

pounds per square inch. That compares with 4.3-psi at 6in penetration for Foremost's Nodwell 110 at its maximum 25-tonnes GVW. ♦

▼ x15p Mack advertised the LRVSW convoy's feat in the Saturday Evening Post, a US magazine that in the late 1950s sold six million copies a week (more than the combined total of today's UK daily newspapers).

**SEAWAY**  
Speeding operations on the St. Lawrence Seaway. Mack 6-wheel dump trucks haul through often rough roads over deep snow. The Mack-built Bantam Boreas with Power Divider—the flexible, four-wheel rear-axle drive that transmits power to the wheels with traction.

**ORANGE JUICE**  
Some Mack's move mountains; others ... move frozen orange juice. While perhaps not as dramatic as the big off-highway projects, distributing highly perishable foods over long routes also puts to the test a truck's reliability. The frozen foods industry, among many others, has come to depend on Mack's with their proved ability to move light of the long haul and deliver on time... every time.

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# THROWING OUT THE ANCHOR

The efficiency of brakes on modern day commercials is almost taken for granted, however, drivers of old will never forget the time when being able to stop quickly was something of an optional extra. Bob Tuck looks back to when the threat of runaways and the distinctive aroma of cooking brake linings were part and parcel of a wagon driver's life.

**B**ack in the day when some of us were still cutting their baby teeth, the brakes on wagons of old were only moderate especially when you appreciate that overloading was a way of life and motors were driven as fast as they could – never mind their archaic speed limits. Such a combination meant that retardation – through relatively tiny brake shoes pressing on rather narrow brake drums – was never going to be that impressive, so no wonder it was a life-saving mantra to 'Always go down a hill in the gear which you need to get up it.'

Thankfully – today – we rarely hear about runaways due to brake fade as generally commercials can stop just as good as they can go. Even the modern day car now has power assistance to ensure excellent response to a touch on the brake pedal while the trend (for both car and commercial) is that electronic sensors can even operate the brakes automatically if they detect something

untoward is going on – and that can be before the driver has even noticed.

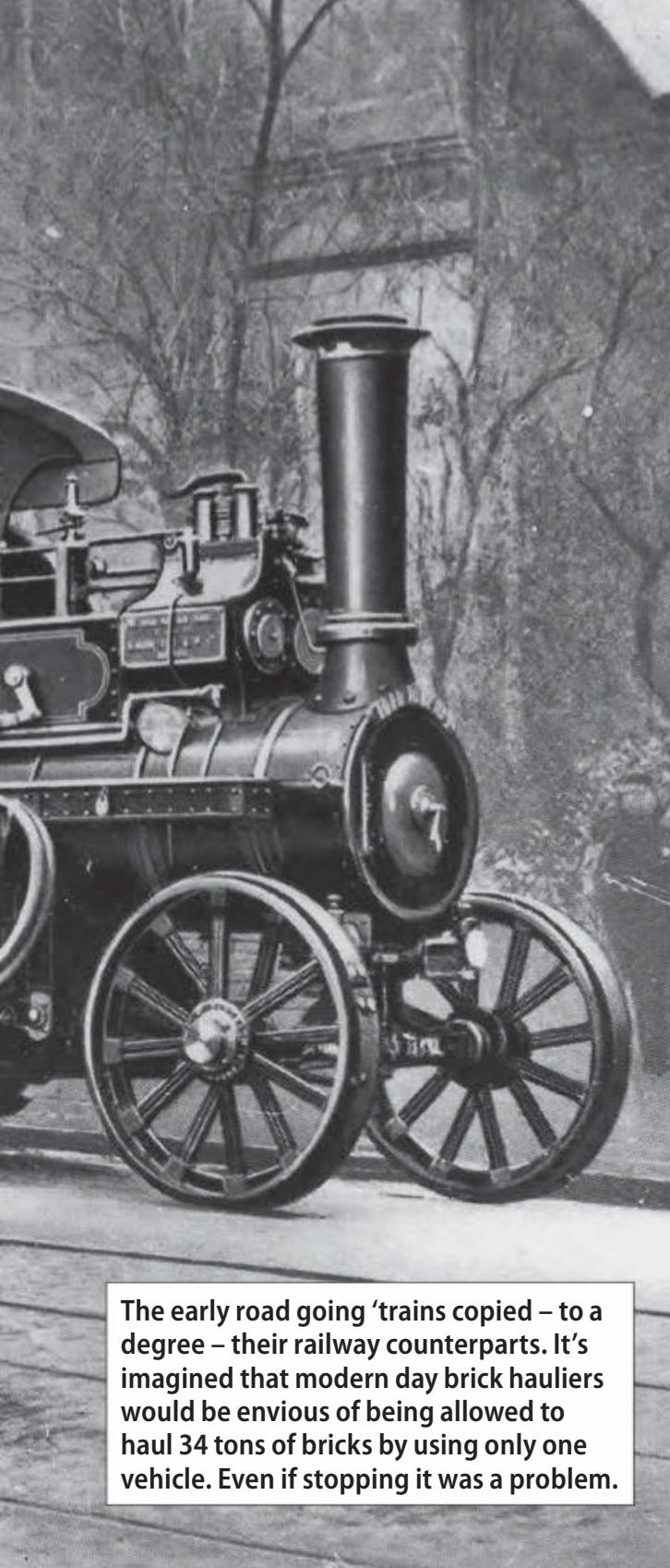
Yes, things are certainly a lot safer in that respect on our modern day roads, which is of course a good thing. However, those brought up as proud 'Old School' members of the wagon driving fraternity might smile as the honing of yet another sixth-sense ability is no longer totally required while delivering freight around our demanding road network. As back in the day, the ability to safely stop wasn't always a given.

## It's Not Rocket Science

If the thought of reading an article on brakes leaves you a bit cold don't fret as the technical bits will be kept to a minimum. And really this feature is just an excuse to trawl back through the archives to dig out some great pictures of old as the one common denominator is that all these vehicles are fitted with brakes – of one form or another.

We could write realms on the merits of spring brake units when compared to lock actuators but that's not on the menu today. True there is a bit of common-sense physics to be understood – like when you lose momentum you generate a lot of heat which in turn has to be dissipated – but that's about it. It's also common sense to be aware that braking systems have evolved ever since the wheeled vehicle was first invented and the ability to utilise some form of speed loosing anchor was needed from these earliest of 'Fred Flintstone' times.

Obviously in the mid 1800s, the longer distance movement of all manner of freight was done by the railways (while not forgetting canal movements of course) so no surprise the braking systems of the much slower moving road going steamers were first sort of copied / evolved from their rail counterparts. The one big difference to road and rail is of course the (lots) lighter road



The early road going 'trains copied – to a degree – their railway counterparts. It's imagined that modern day brick hauliers would be envious of being allowed to haul 34 tons of bricks by using only one vehicle. Even if stopping it was a problem.

going 'trains' were limited to pedestrian like speed limits – and (it's said – I wasn't around then) at first even preceded by a guy on foot waving a flag.

I don't wish to dwell on steamers as I've gone on record as not being a big fan of this noisy / dirty aspect of our road transport history which, albeit, is still passionately loved by many. However, I do feel strongly there should be a law that those steamers who still use our roads should be given absolute precedence at any junction / roundabout or other obstruction as quite honestly while it may be hard work to get these things going, it's simply a work of art to try and stop them. If you wish to extend your knowledge of the fickleness of braking then scrounge a ride onboard a 100-year-old steam powered wagon / traction engine and I vow that you'll then take your cap off in salute to the techniques of how these things are brought to a halt. I exaggerate not.

**"**be aware that braking systems have evolved ever since the wheeled vehicle was first invented **"**



**Photos above and below:** The late Jim Wilkinson was passionate about saving the memory of the Glasgow based manufacturer of Halley. And he would have been really tickled to see these old images of his in print. They are fine illustrations of some of the mechanical linkages involved with these early vehicle's braking systems although we naturally love how the driver's horn is so close to hand. Photo: Iain Wilkinson collection.





▲ The Austrian manufacturer of Saurer was an early importer of their vehicles into the UK and in the early '30s, they had a tie up with the Tyneside engineering concern of Armstrong to sell their vehicles as Armstrong Saurers. The Newcastle based Currie concern were to buy these vehicles for their varied traffic. This arrangement lasted until 1937. The vehicles are recalled as being very early users of full air brakes for their heavier range.

Photo: Iain Wilkinson collection.



▲ This is the type of Albion Chinese Six which the late John Thompson recalled problems with the setting up of its mechanical brakes. However, Albion archivist Ian Maclean tells us that during the period of their build, these particular Albions had their brake system changed in favour of a Lockheed hydraulic system assisted by a Clayton Dewandre servo.

Photo: Albion Archive

## Mechanical Then Fluid

With the internal combustion engine up and running in road going car / commercial form, the evolution that allowed the driver to simultaneously operate the brakes fitted to each of his vehicle's four wheels by pressing just one central pedal was a big step forward. Prior to that of course, a lever was used to pull on brakes fitted to the rear wheels as the engineering required to brake the front wheels – which also steered – took a lot of sorting.

The activation required all manner of mechanical linkages (joining pedal to wheel) but such a system wasn't perfect. I was reminded of the difficulty of adjusting such a mechanical set-up when good mate John

Thompson related problems in this respect with the '30s Albion Chinese-Six load carrier he first drove (in the '50s) for North-East haulier WA Glendinning.

The difficulty arose, John told me, when you left the garage and put something on the back. If the brakes were set-up to work fine when the motor was in the garage empty, once you put a substantial load on, the weight stretched the braking system's rods slightly out of kilter so the brakes in essence came on (so they had to be slackened off just to move). However, if you adjusted the mechanical rods to be set-up when the vehicle was loaded, once the vehicle had this weight removed, the brakes were then out of adjustment and wouldn't really work good enough while empty.

Brake operation was to take a huge step forward after Malcolm Loughead patented the first hydraulic braking system in 1917. Loughead actually changed his name to Lockheed and his Corporation was to be a huge American success story. The one big concern with this new hydraulic set-up was in ensuring there was no air in this system. And just like you bleed a domestic central heating radiator to get rid of any excess air inside to improve its heating ability, brake bleeding was done either at the individual wheel cylinders and / or at the main master cylinder. But again it was also paramount that the brake fluid was kept away from coming into contact with the lining of the brake shoes. That was certainly a no-no.

A huge bonus to a hydraulic braking system

**The eight-wheeler and bogie seems an ideal combination to support such a load as this but it was quite a handful for the driver to take on – especially when you think of how it was braked – with great care.**

Photo: Roger Annis collection.





▲ 'Young' Jim is seen on the left with his brother Bill. Their father Jim Wilkinson senior was also a huge fan of the Halley load carrier and Jim recalls that in the '20s, these Tyneside based load carriers were delivering the Powells Products as far afield as Glasgow and Sheffield by road. Photo: Iain Wilkinson collection.

– when compared to an all mechanical rod set-up – was how the driver could in essence pump them up to enhance the braking effect while on the move. If the initial travel on the brake pedal was a bit long, a quick second – or third – pump on the foot brake would normally generate just the right amount of braking feel. And with every vehicle having a different feel / adjustment to its brakes, a driver soon became aware of the braking balance and what his motor was like to handle. A good driver could also feel if say the vehicle was pulling to one side – or the other – then inspection of the drums at the respective corner could be checked.

While this basic hydraulic braking system may have been all right for a car, it was soon found wanting with heavier loaded commercials. So to help the driver in getting more pressure to the spinning wheel drums – via the wheel brake cylinders – manufacturers adopted a variety of different ways to help. The Hydro-Vac (utilising the assistance of a vacuum to enhance braking pressure) came to the fore then for many while others fitted an air servo to assist the hydraulic application. I'm sure Foden was to utilise an engine driven pump to pressurise their hydraulic system but the downside to this offering was that if the engine was only going slowly, then very little extra assistance was generated.

### Caution Air Brakes

Of course it was a big step forward once full air brakes came into general use on the wagon scene during the 1950s. I've long been a big fan ever since first hearing them in action as I just love the whoosh sound once the foot brake is released. There was also the regular sounds of air tanks blowing off (or compressors lifting) once the system had reached its full capacity. Magic.

In operation, air brakes are of course a

**“The one big concern with this new hydraulic set-up was in ensuring there was no air in this system”**



▲ Leyland launched their eight-wheel Octopus range in 1935 and Alan Dean tells us it was fitted with mechanical brakes operated with the assistance of a vacuum servo albeit on the 1st, 3rd and 4th axles only: "The front axle would have a vacuum cylinder mounted on top of each king pin," says Alan, "and linked with rods to turn a cam which expanded the brake shoes. The rear bogie would have rods from a cross tube in the chassis to the arms which again turned a shaft with a cam on the end to expand the brake shoes. The mechanical linkage would link the cross tube to the brake pedal with a servo unit linked in. When you pressed the brake pedal the servo would cut in and assist the rod system and allow the vacuum to operate the front cylinders simultaneously."



◀ When Scammell joined the rigid eight-wheeler field in the late 1930s they fitted air brakes as standard to their R8s.



▲ It's believed that Foden were to fit an engine driven pump to their vehicles to assist in giving extra pressure to their hydraulic braking systems. Photo: Roger Kenney.



▲ The eight-wheeler and drawbar trailer was 'King of the Road' during the '50s but prior to the footbrake being piped through to the trailer wheels, it was the trailer mate's responsibility to brake the trailer by using a separate multi-pull handbrake. In such an outfit, this brake was situated on his side of the cab. Photo: Roger Kenney.

mechanical linkage which is operated through air chambers. In comparison to what had gone before they were certainly good and to warn other drivers (who were not really used to seeing commercials slow down quickly) the fitting of a 'Caution Air Brakes' sign on the back of such an equipped vehicle was almost mandatory. In fairness, air brakes could take some getting used to as they could be either on or off as of course they didn't have to be 'pumped up' to enhance their braking effort.

Air brakes are still the norm for top weight load carriers although of course it should be emphasised that today, air pressure is now used to keep the brakes off so any inadvertent loss of air means an outfit will have its brakes automatically operated as they fail-safe. In

days of old, when the air was originally used to simply apply the brakes, the failure of the system then afforded no sort of similar back-up. And any driver caught out with no footbrake, had to resort to the modest effect generated by applying the mechanical handbrake – while mentally crossing their fingers.

Air braking must have been around for something like 90 years as I'm sure Scammell (and Saurer / Armstrong Saurer) are recalled as introducing air-pressure for their foot brake operation with heavy-weights as early as the 1930s. In fact, in an old advert of their services, Westinghouse say they were fitting air brakes to solid wheeled Leylands in 1924.



▲ This is the type of Sunter AEC which came to grief when the driver didn't realise he was running out of air. As once the 'Stop' sign came up, there wasn't enough braking effort available to do so.

“but early air brake motors had to make do with a gauge and perhaps a buzzer which warned the driver about low pressure”

However, Leyland – and most of the industry – was somewhat reluctant to fully rely on air brakes at that time because of the major concern over retention of full air pressure. The loss of air regularly occurred while the vehicle was parked up say over a weekend – or even overnight – and sometimes the air system would drain to zero. No problem if you could start the motor alright, to then charge the compressed air tanks up, but if you also had a poor battery and needed a tow start then that could create problems. The late Tyson Burridge used to say that in such a situation, rather than give someone a pull, he'd prefer to give them a push. That way, once they were shoved into motion there was no chance of them just running into the back of you as of course at first there was no air pressure to work the brakes.

Today, we have a variety of fail-safe over-riders built in, but early air brake motors had to make do with a gauge and perhaps a buzzer which warned the driver about low pressure. One odd-ball extra that AEC fitted on the dashboard was a flag type sign which came up saying 'Stop' when the air pressure dropped too low. There's a story from the driving staff of Sunter's of Northallerton who ran some of these AECs and one had a problem with a loose pipe from the compressor. The regular driver was aware of this and just kept his eye on the pressure gauge. If it started to drop – for no obvious reason – he knew the pipe had come loose so he'd just pull in and re-fix it. However, when he was on holiday – and someone else was behind the wheel – the new driver didn't notice what was going on until that little warning flag shot up. And then it



▲ Bristol joined the goods vehicle manufacturing field in the early '50s to provide British Road Services with newly made load carriers. Robin Masters recalls they adopted a straight air braking system from the outset.



▲ The Bedford TK is recalled as having a transmission handbrake and when stationary, it would rock slightly because of the movement in its prop shaft.

Photo: Roger Kenney.

was too late to stop the outfit coming to grief albeit without any injury to the crew.

Yes, no wonder the industry breathed a huge sigh of relief once the concept of spring brake / lock actuators were brought into use. They might be a bind when you couldn't get them off (especially those tetchy lock actuators) but you knew they would always fail safe.

## Secondary Brakes

With the gradual increase in both the weight and (more importantly) speed allowed for commercials, the industry began offering various additional options in the secondary braking field to enhance the performance of the modestly performing foundation brakes. In the main these were of course drum brakes although both AEC and Foden did trial disc brakes in the '50s while in the early '60s, ERF went into production with a rather special rigid eight – with petrol engine – sporting front axle disc brakes. However, it would be another 30 years or so before they truly caught on in the commercial vehicle field.

There was always a requirement for the fitment of a mechanically applied handbrake to operate when the vehicle was stationary and of course, this could also be applied while in motion. But when the likes of Bedford



▲ The small RR badge on the grille of this 1960 ERF KV indicates it was powered by a Rolls-Royce petrol engine. The fitment was trialed around this time but it wasn't a huge success. The eight-wheeler was also fitted with disc brakes to the front but these too had regular problems.

Photo: Roger Kenney.

– with their TK – and Foden began using a transmission type handbrake, the application of these while on the move wasn't really advised.

Around 1960, the exhaust brake came to the fore with firms like Thomas Ash's 'Ashanco' seeing the fitting of a small butterfly flap into the engine's exhaust pipe. As the flap moved across to block the passage of exhaust gases, the theory was that the back pressure slowed the engine down and gave extra retardation. However, at the outset, the industry was concerned their operation could damage a vehicle's engine. Often activated electrically by first movement of the brake pedal or by a button on the floor by a driver's heel (or even by rocking the throttle pedal to the off position) the effect of these could vary. I recall riding with a driver from Rochdale who just loved the sound his Hino exhaust brake made – it was fantastic. The

only problem was that the braking effect it generated was next to nothing.

Mention of sound reminds me of the music coming from applying the multi-pull ratchet handbrake – especially one that was out of adjustment and needed lots of action. However, the best sounding secondary brake ever must be the Jacobs engine brake beloved by Cummins devotees around the world. The retardation effect of the Jake Brake (which in essence knocks the timing of the engine's combustion cycle out of sequence so this in turn slows the driveline down) can be adjusted into various stages but on full

▼ When Albion launched their LAD model Reiver, with the correct gearing it could be quite a fly machine with a 14-ton payload on its back. However, at the outset this load carrier was only fitted with air servo hydraulic brakes.

Photo: Roger Kenney.





◀ This view of the inside of a Leyland Beaver cab shows the huge multi-pull handbrake which in itself was a massive piece of engineering.

▶ Early air brake motors were normally fitted with a pressure gauge which was usually on the small side. This one indicates the vehicle had a split air system so that if one system failed (due to a sudden leak) then the other half of the system could still operate half the vehicle's brakes.

that they grew up hardly requiring the use of the foundation brakes at all. Going up and down the box – while reading the changing road conditions ahead – allowed you to retain control of a vehicle's speed in this fashion. No problemo – unless of course you go downhill a lot.

### Steeper Than The AVERAGE

I count myself lucky in being brought up at Consett in County Durham which in the '50s was dominated by the activity of the huge Consett Iron Company. The variety of traffic in and out of here prompted my entry into the wagon spotting world although other early memories are of the area's hugely undulating terrain. As a youngster, it was great to sit in school and listen to brake squeal and transmission whine of heavily loaded motors tip-toeing down the steep drop from Number One enroute to Blackhill and Shotley Bridge. Not so enjoyable however, was if you were sat on the driving seat and were hoping the brakes wouldn't fail and / or the motor wouldn't jump out of gear at an inopportune time.

While I first think of local places like Ebchester's Station Bank and the old A68 at Riding Mill for testing descents, the geography of the UK as a whole means that most of us can think of inclines in our own back yard

where braking of heavies could be a severe test. And perhaps the greatest blessing of the creation of the motorway network was in the way inclines were almost engineered out of existence. I tend to think about the current M6 as it climbs north through Cumbria because if there wasn't a sign saying you had reached the top of Shap Fell then you may not have realised it. However, take the old A6 from Kendal to Penrith and you'll see what a real test that route still is. And if you turn round and then head south, you'll realise what a corker of a ride it really was for something like a '50s eight wheeler and drag with 20-25 tons on its back. While getting over Shap could be a heck of a slow climb going north, you could spend just as much time going south – down the gradient – as the outfit had to be continually held back in check. No wonder the 'Jungle' café – situated just after the Leyland clock – was a regular stop for many fully loaded motors so their brakes would have time to cool down. Yes, there was still another 8-10 miles or so of undulating descent before you reached Kendal and by then the distinctive smell indicated things were really cooking – again.

### TO BE CONTINUED

There's a lot more to be said about brakes – especially in the field of articulation. There's



▲ AEC fitted this 'Stop' sign to their motors as an indicator to the driver that he was running out of air.



▲ Air brakes were far more effective than those assisted by hydrovac or other servos. To warn other motors of this fact such a sign on the rear of an equipped vehicle was almost mandatory.



▲ We were really taken when John Johnson showed us how he was trying to develop disc braking for his period steam wagon. The standard method of stopping such a vehicle normally leaves a lot to be desired. ►

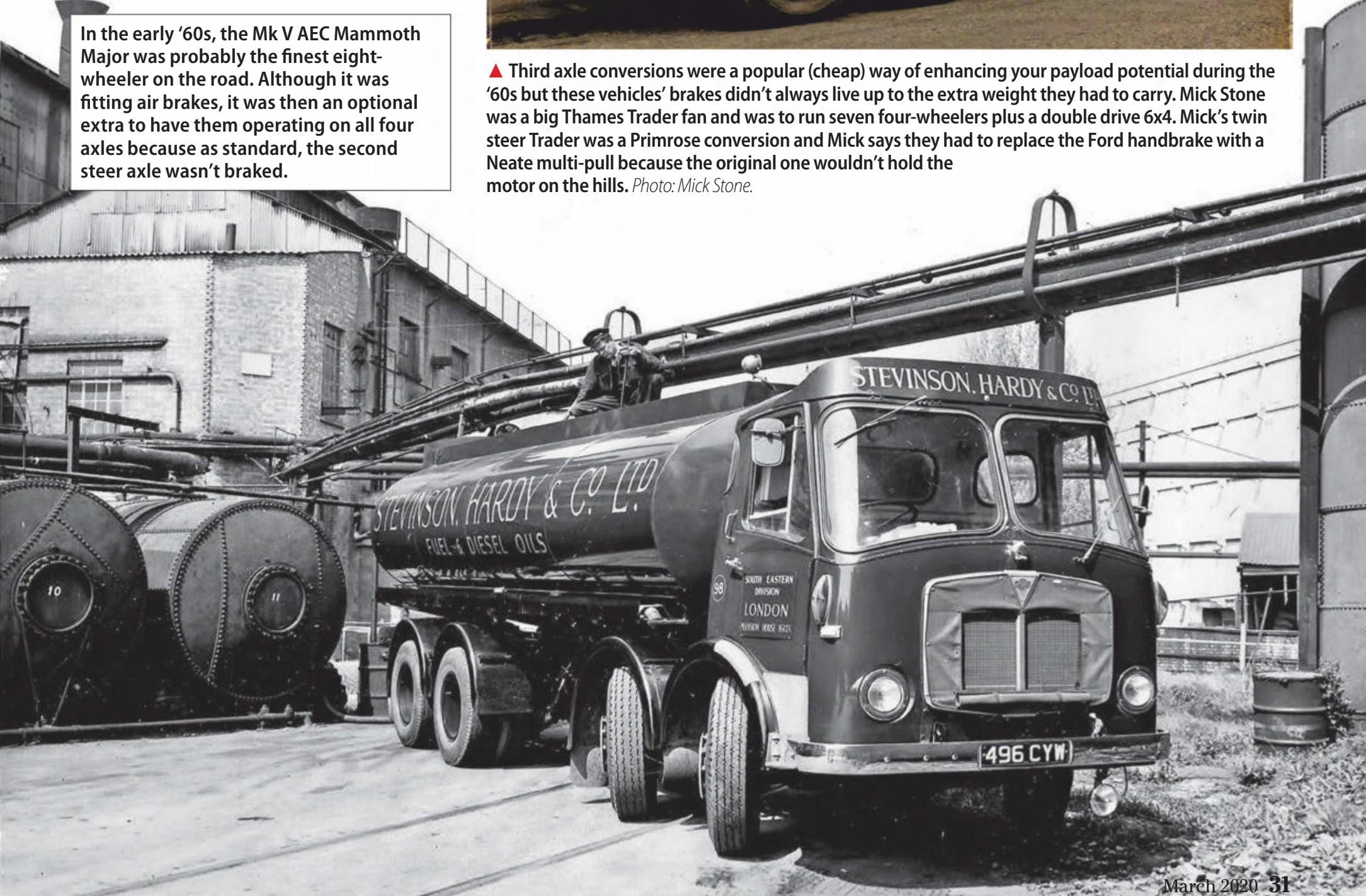
also lots of tales to be told in the demanding field of heavy haulage where a driver's mate ensured that a set of chocks were always kept very close to hand. Not so much to slow you down when going forward but more a case of being able to put them into use when you might run backwards if you prematurely came to a halt on a steep incline.

We'll come back to these two areas of discussion at some other times and of course again use the excuse to have more trawls through the archives looking out for some great pictures of old. Happy days. ♦

In the early '60s, the Mk V AEC Mammoth Major was probably the finest eight-wheeler on the road. Although it was fitting air brakes, it was then an optional extra to have them operating on all four axles because as standard, the second steer axle wasn't braked.



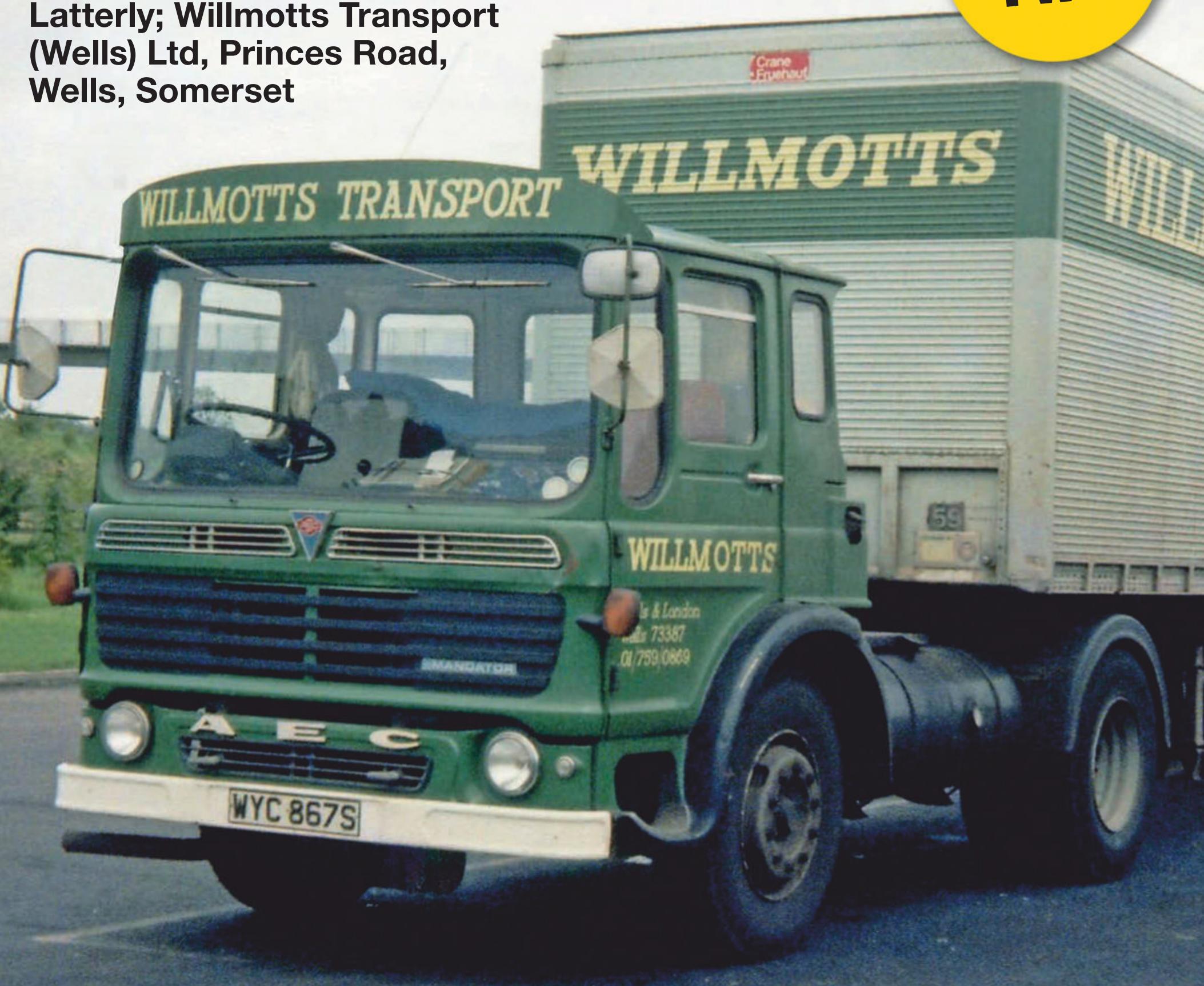
▲ Third axle conversions were a popular (cheap) way of enhancing your payload potential during the '60s but these vehicles' brakes didn't always live up to the extra weight they had to carry. Mick Stone was a big Thames Trader fan and was to run seven four-wheelers plus a double drive 6x4. Mick's twin steer Trader was a Primrose conversion and Mick says they had to replace the Ford handbrake with a Neate multi-pull because the original one wouldn't hold the motor on the hills. Photo: Mick Stone.



# GEORGE WILLMOTT

PART  
TWO

Latterly; Willmotts Transport  
(Wells) Ltd, Princes Road,  
Wells, Somerset



In the second and final part of this feature, Michael Marshall continues the story of Willmotts Transport from Somerset that recently celebrated 100 years in business.

## London Depot

**T**he company had a London depot at Royal Mint Street, Aldgate E1, where there was an office and overnight parking for the lorries. This, the site of a large bombed-out building, had to be vacated when it was to be developed and they next moved to a location near King's Cross station, which was shared with other west country hauliers such as; Tone Vale Transport, Taunton Meat Haulage and Messrs. Guest, Wood & Ling from Bath. Overnight accommodation for drivers was at the nearby small Crestfield Hotel, where they had by arrangement, use of the dormer room at the very top of the building as a bedroom with about eight beds. Later in the

mid-1970s an office, shared by other haulage firms including Bayliss Transport, was used at 232 Harlington High Street, Harlington, Middlesex. From here loads would be obtained from Quaker Oats Ltd at Southall.

This would be delivered to Bayliss Transport at Pucklechurch, or Hadfields at Exeter. Babycham was transported from Showerings at Shepton Mallet to their Brentford depot, the Royal Docks, London and to Shipstones Star Brewery in New Basford, Nottingham. Also, to Dunn & Moore in Glasgow, John Smith's, Tadcaster, the Vaux Brewery in Sunderland and the Federation Brewery, Dunston, Gateshead, back-loading with the Babycham empties and wood pulp from Hartlepool docks for St.

Cuthbert's paper mills and the Wansborough Paper Co. Ltd at Watchet. Another back-load from the north of England was long life milk from Dewsbury to Unigate in Walthamstow. Bank note paper from St. Cuthbert's to Liverpool docks for export and court and legal paper for the Law Courts from Wiggins Teape in Fetter Lane in London. Back-loads were obtained from Clearing Houses such as Silver Roadways and included sugar from Tate & Lyle at Silvertown to their depots at Walford Cross, Taunton and Tavistock. Card paper from St. Cuthbert's Paper Works to the Metal Box Co. factory at Great Guildford Street, Southwark and artist's paper to Winsor & Newton, Croxley Green, Rickmansworth. Back-loads consisted

Last of the line. WYC 867S, Chassis No.2TG4R 35914, was one of the last Mandators to come-off the AEC production line at Southall and also among the last five Mandators purchased by Willmotts. She was delivered on 8th August 1977 and had a Jennings sleeper conversion, not exactly spacious, but more comfortable than sleeping across the engine cover.



▲ Captured at rest in a layby on the A4 near Devizes by enthusiast Adrian Cypher in the late 60s, is DYC 128C an AEC Mercury artic with a neatly sheeted load of paper. Supplied by Arlington Alma Garage of Bristol, the motor was new in July 1965.



▲ A view across Princes Road on a wet day in the late 60s, with AEC Mammoth Major tinfront YYA 845, fitted with a Tiverton box body for transporting cheese on the left. On the right is one of the Fina diesel pumps. Across the road is the small yard that was wedged between the Regal Cinema and the Boys Club to the right, alongside of which are a couple of early tilt cab Mandators. A Park royal cabbed AEC Marshal six-wheeler, 763 UYD, is to the left, behind which are a couple of AEC Mercury four wheelers. Also on show is the rear of a driver's Jaguar XK150.

of wood pulp from Purfleet, Tilbury Docks and Grays in Essex. Other back-loads were R White's lemonade from Croydon, soft drinks from Idris & Co. in Camden Town and sweets and confectionary from James Pascall's & Co. Ltd's (part of Cadburys) chocolate factory at Mitcham in Surrey. Also, Paynes Poppets confectionary from their factory at Beddington, Croydon.

All manner of milk products, such as cheese and butter from dairies and creameries in the south west; including the Unigate factories at Chard Junction and Glastonbury Road, Wells; and trunk it all over the UK, with the Midlands, the North and Scotland the main destinations. A variety of backloads were obtained to the south-west. Also, milk-powder from Unigate at Hemyock to their depots, including Bourton, Basingstoke, Mitcham and East Leake and creamed rice from their Bason Bridge dairy. Trufood powdered baby

milk and foods were also delivered from Unigate direct to many maternity hospitals and Sainsburys stores around the country. Butter from Buchanan's Wharf at Avonmouth to St. Erth, Cornwall, with back-loads of china clay from Par to St. Cuthbert's to be used in the paper-making process. Another load from Avonmouth was alum for St. Cuthbert's.

The milk powder proved to be a particularly tricky load for drivers, as it was packed in cube-shaped cardboard boxes, which had to be hand-balled-on the lorry and by the time it was loaded, the bottom ones had been squashed nearly flat, especially after the driver had then walked all over the top of the boxes to roll his sheets out. He also started to wonder if he was going to leave the dairy without it all falling off! After roping it down using most

of the rope and every rope hook, within a few miles the boxes would move and create a bulge in the sheets. The driver would then have to find a safe place to pull-over, tighten all the ropes from back to front and carry-on until the boxes moved again. From Somerset to London, he may have had to do this four or five times, but he always managed to get there!

Other work included hauling Contiboard from St. Cuthbert's Mill to Harrison Bros. at Rickmansworth and paper to John Dickensons at Apsley Paper Mills at Hemel Hempstead, famous for the 'Basildon Bond' brand of writing paper and envelopes. Back-loads were obtained from the Ovaltine factory in Kings Langley, Hertfordshire. General tramping work was also carried-out.



▲ 1963 AEC Marshal flat, 763 UYD, looks a bit sorry for itself after rolling-down a bank in Scotland when the road gave-way. She featured a trailing axle and was supplied by AEC dealers' Arlington Alma Garage of Bristol. On the right is Mammoth Major Mark 3 tinfront, VYA 505 which had come new in November 1955. On the left is AEC Marshal CYD 697C, one of the last to feature a Park Royal cab. She was new in April 1965.

## George's Final Years

The business was incorporated as a limited company known as Willmotts Transport (Wells) Ltd, on 23rd August 1961. The nominal capital of the undertaking was £30,000, divided into 20,000 Preference Shares of £1 each, and 10,000 Ordinary Shares of £1 each. The named directors were George's wife Emily Mary Lax Willmott and his eldest son; Eric George Willmott, motor engineer. In 1963, George Willmott who was by then retired held the 20,000 Preference Shares; while Emily M.L Willmott held 7,000 Ordinary Shares and Eric Willmott and his brother and transport manager, Ralph David Willmott, both held 1,500 Ordinary Shares each.

At the time of the conversion of his business into a limited company in 1961, George Willmott took his retirement, leaving the running of the firm in the hands of his two sons; Eric and Ralph. He was then aged 65 and in the following years his health started to suffer. He continued to reside at Cannons Heath, in North Road, Wells, where he pursued and had a keen interest in boating. He was a member of Weston-super-Mare and Bristol Yacht Clubs and owned his own sailing boats which were moored at Mevagissey in Cornwall. As well as the enjoyment of sailing, George also took great pleasure in swimming and was a founder member of the Wells Swimming Club and was later one of the club's vice-presidents. He was also a Freemason, being initiated into the Benevolent Lodge of Wells in 1942.

He also carried-out farming, having had his own farm at one time. Another of his hobbies was to show horses and trotting ponies at local shows. He was a keen supporter of Wells City Carnival, not doubt providing lorries for carnival floats.

George suffered a short illness during Easter 1965 and sadly passed-away on Saturday 17th April, aged 69 years. His funeral took-place at St. Thomas' Church, Wells, on Monday 26th April 1965 and was attended by many representatives

of the firms who had used his services over the years, including members of the Showering family, and other haulage local contractors, such as Sam Oatley. George was survived by his widow Emily; his two sons Eric and Ralph and his daughter Joan Vowles.

After George's death, his surviving daughter Mrs. Joan Mary Vowles of Weston-super-Mare, became a shareholder in Willmotts Transport (Wells) Ltd and was the holder of 7,400 Preference Shares in the company. His widow Emily also remained on the board.

David Charles Willmott, born on 10th October 1957, the son of Ralph Willmott joined the board of directors in the capacity of Office Manager.

## AEC

As a major user of the AEC marque, Willmotts Transport was among a select few companies chosen by AEC to test the new V8 Mandator

before the model was officially launched and put into production. This particular Mandator was registered

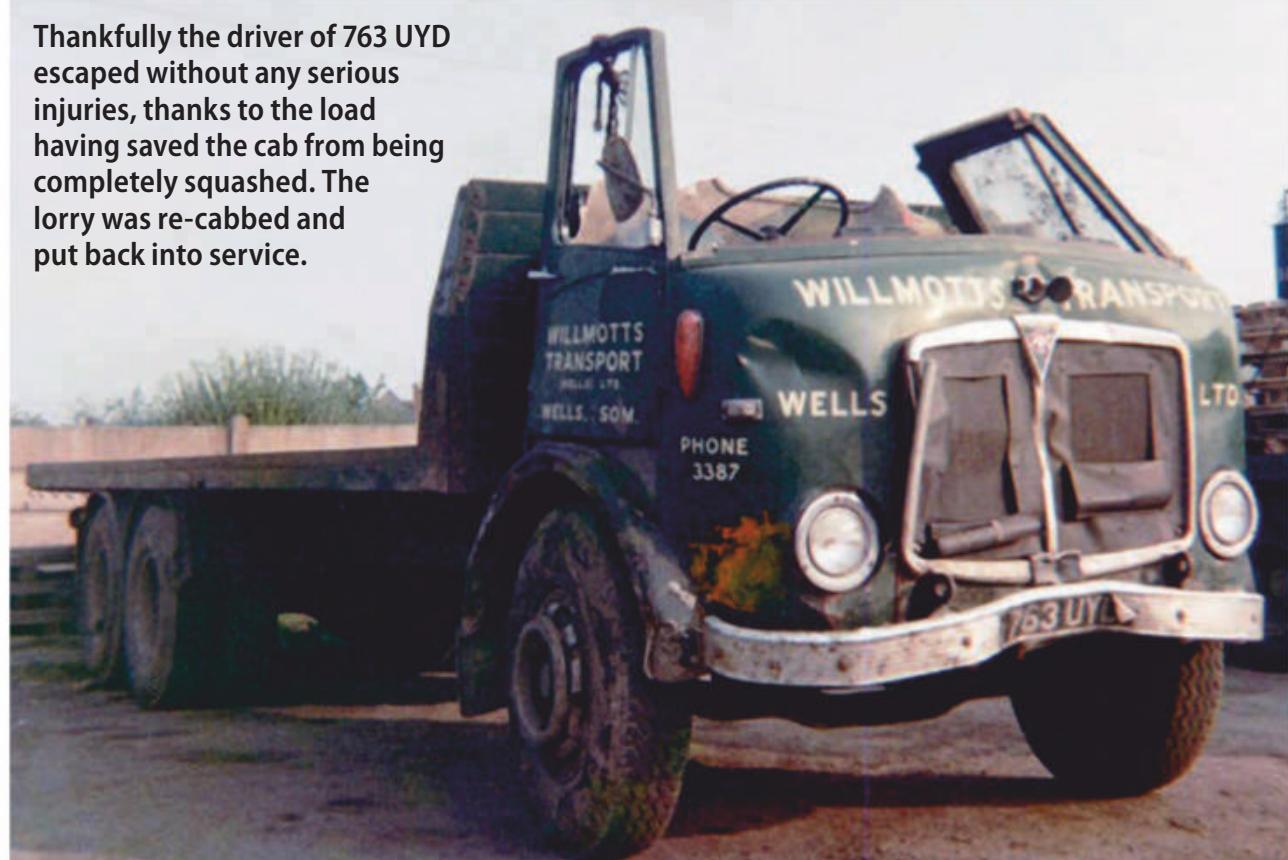
SYA 418F on 6th June 1968, being Chassis No. VTG4R 016, fitted with the AVM8/740 12 litre capacity engine, with a rating of 250bhp in naturally aspirated form. The Mandator was supplied by Arlington Alma Garage of Bristol, from which Willmotts had purchased many of their AECs.

Before the V8 engine had been fully tested and developed, AEC were pressurized to get it into full production by the British Leyland hierarchy.

The resulting spectacular and well documented failure of the V8 was to lead to the premature demise of AEC as a maker of commercial vehicles less than 10 years later. Willmotts' V8 fared no better and suffered frequent break-downs and is remembered for having an oily engine, for being rather 'smoky' and for having to have the big-end shells done on a regular basis. It was soon relegated to shunting duties. Despite the failure of the V8, Willmotts remained loyal to the AEC marque and went on to purchase many more Mandators, but only those fitted with the normally aspirated AV760 diesel.

In 1978, the firm was still running a fleet of 30 AEC Mandator artics painted in the, now famous, 'Tekaloid' Middle Green colour made by Thornley & Knight of Bordesley Green. During the late summer and autumn that year, Willmotts took delivery of five of the last Mandators off the AEC production line at Southall, shortly after production had ceased. These were: WYC 860S, August 1977, WYC 867S, September 1977, WYC 870S, October 1977, WYC 874S, November 1977 and last of the line WYC 879S, which went on the road in February 1978. They, like the previous three Mandators, were fitted with Jennings sleeper conversions, the first sleeper cabbed vehicles to join the fleet. Four of these were later to see further service when Willmotts later disposed of them to Spiers of Melksham, another famous user of the AEC marque. But what was to be the Mandators replacements when they inevitably came-up for renewal?

**Thankfully the driver of 763 UYD escaped without any serious injuries, thanks to the load having saved the cab from being completely squashed. The lorry was re-cabbed and put back into service.**



## New Livery

In January 1978, the firm took delivery of their first DAF 2300; a totally new departure which also heralded a totally new livery of yellow with green lettering, the days of the famous green liveried AECs was definitely drawing to a close. The DAF 2300 had been introduced to the UK at the Earls Court Commercial Motor Show in the autumn of 1976.

The Leyland Buffalo; British Leyland's offering as the successor of the Mandator was considered, but was rejected as the axle ratios offered with the model were not suitable for the firm's needs; it wasn't available as a proper sleeper; and it was only fitted with a six speed gearbox. A Leyland Marathon was tried for evaluation, but also failed to impress.

Brothers Eric and Ralph, who was then operational director, approached the problem in an objective way. They drew up the specification of their 'ideal unit' rather than just looking at some of the tractor units then on the market. Then having done this they looked at the market to find the unit that came closest to their specification. One important consideration was that the unit would have a low unladen weight staying up around the 32-ton limit as it felt unnecessary at the time to increase to the likelihood of the up-rating to a 40-ton limit. Good fuel consumption was another consideration, as the firm's artics were covering around 60,000 miles a year, so the firm's diesel bill was quite hefty; they even looked at the ability of fitting long-range fuel tanks. It was also decided that a proper sleeper cab was essential and the whole cab had to be acceptable and liked by the drivers.



▲ HYC 960D, was an early example of the new tilt cab range offered by AEC using the Leyland Group 'Ergomatic' cab. New in July 1966 this Mercury and sister vehicle HYC 955D, were the last AEC rigid to join the Willmott fleet. Both were fitted with the AV505 diesel. Seen outside the Princes Road garage, note the twin diesel tanks.

The Willmott brothers didn't set out to buy DAF or even any other foreign make, but the DAF 2300 was the only vehicle that got near the spec drawn up by the brothers. They chose the DAF 2300 as they considered it an efficient 32-tonner – capable of performing the work required of it. They were also hedging their bets so that if maximum weights went to 34 tons the 2300s would be legal and workable. With a low unladen weight complete with fifth wheel it was light and there was even a proper sleeper cab

option with twin bunks. They were even able to utilise the standard DAF yellow as the base colour for their revised livery.

The DAF engine was of course a major consideration, being both turbocharged and intercooled (charge cooled) and very different from the naturally aspirated AEC AV760 engine as fitted in the Mandator. The 2300 unit had the DAF DHU825 which is an in-line six cylinder 8.25-litre engine developing 230bhp (169kW) at 2,400rpm.

▼ Representative of the many AEC Mandator artics and Crane Fruehauf trailers, the standard outfit that Willmotts Transport operated in the 70s, is SYC 558M, seen parked at its home base in Princes Road. New in August 1973, she was powered by the lusty AV760 diesel and supplied by Arlingtons of Bristol.



Some drivers occasionally commented that they could do with a little more power even at 32 tons, but Willmotts believed that 230bhp at this weight gave the right balance between fuel consumption, performance and purchase price. The Willmotts also liked the ZF nine speed gearbox used in the 2300, preferring its range-change to a splitter. They were also able to fit an extra fuel tank on their units using an identical cylindrical tank as the original equipment, mounting it on the opposite side of the chassis.

## On The Move

In 1981 a further major transformation took place when the company moved its headquarters from Wells, where it had been for over 60 years, to an old quarry site at Waterlip, Cranmore, to the east of Shepton Mallet. Beautiful though Wells undoubtedly is being Britain's smallest city, it was increasingly becoming a less than ideal location for a haulage company. It's a very old historic city famous for its cathedral, with very narrow streets and articulated lorries were not exactly welcomed by the locals.

The move was further necessitated by the ever increasing traffic chaos caused as lorries reversed into the depot in Princes Road, near the busy junction with Priory Road (then still part of the main A39 trunk road) by the Regal Cinema. The firm had also outgrown its Princes Road base, with parking needed not just for 30 artics, but also the 60 trailers. Willmotts tried to ease the situation by using extra parking spaces in Wells, but relocating from the city to purpose-built premises on a spacious former quarry site at Waterlip, seemed like the best option to take. The vacated site in Princes Road was later occupied by Autospeed, but at the time of writing (2018) has a branch of Pets Corner based there. The former pre-nationalisation yard was literally next door. After BRS vacated the site, it was taken-over by the South West Electricity Board.

The move not only helped the traffic



▲ One Mandator that did survive was SYC 771R, which was delivered to Willmotts on 1st November 1976 and last on-the-road in November 1984. She ended her days with Willmotts as shunter at Wookey paper mills, but survived to be restored by the Manship family. Here she is after restoration with George's right-hand-man of many years, Ralph Manship. The lorry was later damaged in a barn fire and was sold-on, her current whereabouts is unknown.

problems in Wells, but allowed Willmotts to expand in both traditional and new directions. Here they were able to establish a purpose-built depot with plenty of garaging space for the growing fleet of vehicles and trailers. Two new fully insulated warehouses were constructed, each with a capacity of 20,000 square feet; a workshop for the maintenance of the fleet of lorries and a modern suite of offices. A separate engineering department to undertake outside contract engineering work was also established.

The fleet then stood at 30 artics, with a number of smaller vehicles, and some 80 trailers from curtain-siders, refrigerated vans, insulated box vans and flat trailers, ranging up to 38 tonnes, gross to carry-out a wide range of transport work.

Following its relocation, the company was

renamed simply Willmotts Transport Ltd, with 'Wells' dropped from the title to reflect that they were no longer based in the city, which took effect from 17th February 1983.

## The Family

George's widow, Emily died in 1984, while his daughter, Mrs. Joan Vowles, passed away on 11th March 2015.

Eric Willmott resigned as a director of Willmotts Transport Ltd on 23rd December 1992, when he was approaching his 65th birthday. Sadly, Eric George Willmott passed away peacefully on 3rd April 2018, the eve of his 90th birthday. He was a much loved figure in Wells and apart from his co-directorship of Willmotts Transport, he had been captain and chairman of Wells Rugby Club for many years. He was later also chairperson of the Riding for the disabled at Burcott. Having learnt to ride at a young age, he continued to ride horses all his life. Eric also had an enduring passion for cars, motorcycles and sidecars and enjoyed circuit racing, hill climbing events, rallying and the Isle of Man TT races. He was a gentle character and his beaming smile earned him the nickname 'smiler' at school.

His younger brother Ralph David Willmott, tendered his resignation as a director of Willmotts Transport Ltd on 19th July 2008. He was then aged 76.

## Merger

DB Haulage (the initials of owner David John Buxton) was established in 1992, also in Wells, becoming DJB Haulage Ltd in December 1997. In March 2010, Willmotts Transport was acquired by business partners, Andrew Stott and David Buxton and merged with DJB Haulage Ltd, becoming WillmottsDJB, thus establishing the ADMP Group Ltd.

Following the merger of the two firms, David Charles Willmott, the last surviving member of the family still on the board, resigned his



▲ After being exhumed at Rush Green Motors, we see the mortal remains of AEC Mercury YYD 210. The cab has completely collapsed and whoever takes on this restoration has their work cut-out.

directorship on 1st May 2015. His place on the board was taken by Matthew Loxton. David Buxton retired from the firm during 2017. Then in February 2018, the business was split with DJB's Southampton container operations being sold to James Kemball Ltd from Felixstowe, with the Willmotts Transport and distribution side retained at the Waterlip site.

Today, Willmotts Transport with BRC quality accreditation, concentrate on warehousing and distribution for local firms, hauling such things as consumer and white goods and Tetra Pak packaged drinks and are part of the Palletforce network. Still based at Waterlip Business Park, the company has grown from a warehousing business with a small number fleet of vehicles to one of the South West's leading transport and distribution companies.

Now part of Stotts Group Ltd, with Andy Stott group managing director; Andy Tuck group transport manager and Matthew Loxton operations director; the business is going through a further phase of expansion. The current fleet in 2019 stands at 63 vehicles and 73 trailers.

## Survivors

Thankfully not all of the Willmotts old motors were cut-up. One that survived was 1950 AEC Matador Mk.3 artic, MYA 462. She was sold c.1968 to Norton-Radstock College for £5 for their apprentices to practice ignition timing on the 9.6 litre diesel engine. There she remained under cover but minus cab for about 20 years until the college's H.G.V department closed.

The AEC was then purchased by James Shorland from Exeter, who found a Park Royal cab for her and did much restoration, before the lorry found its way back to Somerset in 2009.

Another Willmotts motor that has survived is

WYB 781, an Albion Chieftain FT 111 TR artic, which was new to Willmotts in September 1956. After passing through several owners including well known Albion enthusiast Maurice White, the Albion too is now back in Somerset, undergoing a full restoration to Willmotts livery. This interesting motor is fitted with a Scammell coupling, six-speed gearbox and an Eaton two-speed back axle, a replacement for which had to be sourced from the United States of all places. This Albion was remembered with affection by Eric Willmott.

The present company has also purchased with the aim to eventual restoration, the remains of 1957 AEC Mercury, YYD 210, which had spent many years in Rush Green Motors in Hertfordshire. I used the term 'remains' because this motor is in a very poor state, having languished outside exposed to the elements for over 40 years. But where there's a hulk, there's hope.

Of the many Ergomatic Mandators once operated by the firm only two or possibly three seemed to have survived the cutter's torch. There is 1976 2TG4R model, SYC 771R, which after coming off the road spent several years as works shunter at Wookey Paper Mills. After retirement it was purchased and restored in full Willmotts livery by the Manship family.

After suffering fire damage following a barn fire, the Mandator was sold-on and its current whereabouts is unknown, although the DVLA records it as currently being 'Not taxed for on road use.'

The last Mandator that Willmotts put on-the-road in February 1978, WYC 879S, which was fitted with a Jennings sleeper conversion, has also survived. Like several of its predecessors it too was sold after Willmotts had finished with her to Spiers of Melksham, another big



▲ As a tribute to the firm's heritage, the present company commissioned this wonderful montage on the rear of cab of one of its latest Scania artics. It features and pays homage to many of the vehicles that Willmotts Transport has operated in the past.

user of the AEC marque. It passed from Spiers ownership into preservation.

For several years the AEC was rallied in full Spiers livery minus the sleeper conversion, but was later repainted in the livery of C.S & J Bolton of Boreham, her owners at the time. In recent years the Mandator has passed to Mark O'Reilly from Hucknall, Notts. He has rallied her in his own maroon livery, with the Union flag emblazoned across the front grille and a ballast box on the fifth wheel. ♦

▼ After being retired from road work, many of Willmotts motors ended their days as works shunter at St. Cuthbert's Paper Mill. On this duty we see SYA 946R, which surprisingly, is still in day-cab form having never been fitted with a sleeper. Delivered new on 1st October 1976, her eventual fate is unknown.



# Heritage **COMMERCIALS**

A WORLD OF CLASSIC LORRIES, TRUCKS AND VANS





**D**ave Watson's immaculately turned out 1969 Dodge K1050.  
Photo Bob Tuck

# MILITANT

PART  
TWO

This month, Rob is still recovering from his logging tractor restoration, but he needs another project! Is there another Militant out there needing his attention? Of course, there is! Mike and Julie Blenkinsop found out more.

**R**ob photographed the rebuilding of his logging tractor well. Stripping the vehicle down to chassis cab, Rob fabricated a new rear body-frame and changed the straight-sided, wooden, chariot-style cargo area for a more upmarket step-side with flowing lines. The 'raves', seemingly, are the low bars on the side of a logging tractor which stops the bits and pieces on the cargo deck from falling off and are usually fabricated from a length of 50mm box section metal with a covering of 2mm sheet aluminium or steel.

A donor Mark One, 900 JHN, from a chap called Nathan Cooper, provided a lot of valuable parts and a weekend was spent removing as many bits as possible for the rebuild. Nathan's donor Militant had a colourful past. Its last revenue earning job was as a recovery wagon with BVT Recovery company, it had then been acquired by traveller 'Chod'

▼ The finished project ex-Militant gun tractor, ex-01 BP 60, now logging tractor 375 UXK.

who took it to the Glastonbury Festival at Pilton in 2000.

Meanwhile, Rob had spent many happy hours with a grinder while fitting the crane structure to his Militant's flat-bed base as bits of metal insisted on snagging the bodywork. Now registered 375 UXK, it took off on one of its first major outings, filling up in its hometown of Sittingbourne and heading for the AEC Gathering at Newark. It ticked along at 32mph for the 160-mile journey and got through £220 (nearly 200 litres) worth of petrol by the time it returned to base, posting a return of just over 10mpg. A run, in a later year when the fuel system had been well-sorted, increased the consumption to around 14mpg. Driving a Militant for six hours non-stop is pretty tiring, so Rob wasn't in the right mood for a 60-mile extra road run just as he arrived at the event; still, there was always the six-hour drive back to look forward to...

Rob has done around 1,000 miles a year in the logging tractor and has had it operational

for around seven years now, so has covered about 7,000 miles. When he did his calculations in 2017, he had done about 5,000 miles in it. He estimated that he has used a fifth of a Militant military tanker load of fuel, gobbling around 2,500 litres and spent around 170 hours keeping the driver's seat warm!

Rob also had some further heritage qualifications for his lust for the Militant as his father-in-law, Eric, had driven them in his own National Service days. It is believed that he served with 77 Heavy Regiment Royal Artillery, based at Delmenhorst in West Germany, a troop which had short wheelbase heavy artillery gun tractors in the 01 BP 20 to 40 group around 1957. Pictures are available of 01 BP 33 at Bergen-Hohne with 163 Regiment and it is also understood that one of these early Mark Ones, 01 BP 28, is indeed now in preservation.





▲ The interior of the Militant has improved with a new steering wheel.

Having finished the logging tractor restoration, Rob found himself hankering after another challenge. When he saw an ad in a classic truck magazine of December 2015, he decided to chase the 10-ton, Atlas crane-equipped, flat-bed, Militant cargo truck which was being advertised. After contacting the seller, arrangements were made to view the Militant, but he wasn't expecting what happened next.

What he came upon, on arriving at the given address, was an Aladdin's cave of military vehicles which had all been driven into the yard, straight from Ruddington and other Ministry sales sites, and amazingly left untouched for more than 30 years. Aside from Bren gun carriers, Leyland Hippo cargos and Green Goddess fire appliances, he caught a glimpse of the rear body of a fuel tanker. On closer inspection, he was delighted to see an AEC badge on its radiator and that it was, indeed, a rare example of the AEC Militant refueller with a tanker body built by Thompsons of Bilston in Staffordshire (number 4284). Fortunately, the seller was one of the good guys and was quite willing to negotiate a fair price with Rob, enabling him to become the ecstatic owner of an AEC Militant FV11009 fuel tanker.

AEC had produced a well-respected refueller during the war years in the form of the 6 x 6 model O854 Marshal, a lengthened version of the Matador, which is often seen in wartime airfield film footage refuelling Lancaster or Halifax aircraft at bomber stations and in period movies simulating their use during the War all over England.

Rob's tanker was serial number O859 662, which turned out to have been 65 BN 57, a 2,500-gallon (approx. 12,500 litre) refueller from a 1954 contract, 6/V/13696. The contract was for 83 units for the Army, numbering



▲ Sparkling in its new claret colour before the crane went on.



▲ The crane is fitted, testing begins.



▲ Remember the logging tractor Rob took on? Here it is on the day he acquired it.



▲ Rob starts to dismantle the old logging bodywork off the Militant.



▲ Cab work rebuilding is finished, and undercoat paint is starting to appear.



▲ Enjoying the years of hard work, Militant and Rob's family are flying the flag, which is useful when, having gone for a beef burger and a pint (or two), it makes finding the lorry easier.

them between 64 BN 88 and 65 BN 70. It was issued to 251 Squadron RCT until 1977 after which it went very Scottish, joining the 225 Queens Own Yeomanry Fuel Tanker Squadron, Royal Corps of Transport, based near Edinburgh; Rob has decided against purchasing the kilt for the moment!

Fitting it up with some new batteries and jump-leads, the old A223 engine coughed into life and Rob eased her out of the barn which had been home for around 30 years. Surprisingly, many accessories worked, even the horn, but many others didn't. The brakes were non-existent, which proved something of a problem, as the Militant had to drive along a quiet country lane to access the low-loader transporter which had been organised

with D and G Cars. The big Militant looked surprisingly small as it mounted the low-loading trailer with a big bonneted Scania 144G-530 at the business end. The Militant behaved well, as did the three motorists who encountered it coming in the opposite direction.

The refuellers were obviously used for fuelling-up aircraft, but they were also photographed being used to service Westland Wessex helicopters too. The Army had used 64 BN 91 in its publicity pictures. The refueller's tank is divided into five compartments and is capable of pumping 80 gallons-per-minute against a 25ft head and 15ft suction lift. The rebuild of the refueller was done over the summer of 2017 and into the winter of 2018.



▲ Rob's first sight of the tanker-variant of the Mark One Militant.



▲ Blowing up six 15-00-20 tyres takes a lot of puff.



▲ The scene that greeted Rob as he peered into the new project tanker's cab before extraction from its 25-year barn stay.



▲ Although a lot of preparatory work was necessary, the Militant tanker came out of the barn under its own power.



▲ Tyre changing is quite an exercise, but great servicing facilities make the job easier.

While Rob had done most of the cab reconstruction at the bus garage storage site, the top of the cab had been transported home to be repaired in the evenings. It did pose a problem when, once repaired, it had become a good deal heavier due to the newly rebuilt extra metal panels. Work on the rotten cab structure continued through the winter even after subsequent injury of a torn shoulder which put Rob out of action for a few weeks. After some months of searching out the right information, DVLC issued the tanker with a new period registration of 294 UYU.

Freezing temperatures and bitter January winds didn't excite his enthusiasm for working on it outside in the garage car park, but still the work continued to move forward and he jokes, more money was spent on backache liniments than on truck parts.

What happened to the Atlas, crane-equipped, Mark One Rob had originally gone to the yard to buy? On inspection, it proved to be quite a sad example and Rob would have had to reject it anyway.

After Christmas 2018, with help from son, Stuart, the tanker was being slowly restored to its former glory. In fact, work throughout the spring brought it up to roadworthy condition and then all the hard work was celebrated with its first road run on the 30th June 2019, a nine-mile, incident-free jaunt around the local area.

We have a record of this milestone event in Rob's own words, 'Nine and a half miles covered, with no major issues. Couple of small things to attend to, brakes will need further adjustment once they have bedded in a bit more, and the clutch travel is right at the top, which may just be in need of adjustment or, on the pessimistic side, it could be worn out. I have got a fresh clutch plate in stock, but I don't fancy using it just yet. That said, she drives beautifully and is so quiet with the cargo exhaust filtering out the noise, you can even have a reasonable conversation with the passenger without yelling.'

Very different from the other one, the Militant logging tractor. That is a raucous, little go-kart by comparison, very bouncy and a bit boy-racer! You can chuck it about through corners and have a lot of fun with it; the tanker is far more sedate, a steadier, more polite, mode of travel. That said, it is by no means slow (well, not for a Militant) and it pulls very well, easily keeping up 30mph up the hills. The longer tanker wheelbase and additional weight makes for a lot smoother

ride, it seems to sit comfortably on the road.'

Rob continues, 'Another aspect is the difference between the transmission of the two Militants. The gearbox on the Timber Tractor is very tight and unforgiving, miss a gear and you are doomed! On the other hand, the tanker is sweet, almost synchro, the lever just glides through the ratios. Steering is lighter too, which must be down to not having a driven front axle. Certainly, a very different driving experience, but all very positive.'

In trying to get a couple of very large bolts freed on the tanker body, Rob learnt a valuable lesson after buying a cheap, inferior tool when the entire shaft of a replica Stillson broke off, sending him flying as he was applying maximum pressure. At that second, he also made a mental note not to leave immovable large objects around the work-site as he double-tripped over the Militant bumper bar, just missing some very nasty metal and crashing to the ground; he remembers the noise his bones made as his shoulder took the fall. He carried on, but next morning, couldn't move any of the inflamed joints, which put him, not quite out of action, but forced to work a lot slower. Another week of 'Deep Heat' muscle medication!

By late August, the cab structure had been stripped and completely rebuilt and in mid-September, the first can of five-litre British Army Green was opened and swallowed up by the Militant cab. The tanker body de-scaling had started, but due to its size would take quite a few months of work before the Bondaprimer went on, followed by the rest of the contents of the green paint tins.

The 'Knocker' was still part of the British Army's working fleet until, at least, 1991, when a CALM-equipped (Crane Attachment Lorry Mounted) Militant flatbed was reported as still working with a Royal Engineers squadron; the soldiers still struggling with the lack of power steering.

The CALM was particularly useful as a latter-day conversion of the Mark One Militant (example 16 ER 31) allowing them to handle bridging units in Royal Engineer squadrons; usually the body was converted to a flat bed and the two-ton capacity crane unit was supplied by Atlas. A particularly interesting plant conversion was 27 CL 26 which used up all its long wheelbase to accommodate a Royal Engineers' drilling rig.

Quite a few Militants have survived, mostly the HAT, Heavy Artillery Tractor version. These can be readily identified by their main visual difference, which is the shape of the bodywork over the back bogies. The cargo exhibits straight metal panels, while the HAA has a flowing curved 'one-piece' mudguard.

A Norfolk specialist plant enthusiast has an interesting Mark One. Carrying Army registration 36 BM 64, I first photographed it at a Northumberland tractor rally back in 2002, showing the UK plate RSL 467. I believed it was then owned by an enthusiast from Berwick-upon-Tweed. It was an

► Rob's first project, his AEC logging tractor, came in handy when fitting the upper cab.



▲ A slow drive down a country lane was necessary to access the heavy transporter.



▲ Close-up view of the front corner panel gives some idea of the rust damage needing replacement.



▲ Winter weather doesn't help work on the heavy brakes.



▲ The cab top shell has been stripped and new panelling is fabricated and fixed up at home in the evenings.



▲ When the work on the upper portion of the cab was finished, Rob did have a few minor problems getting the rebuilt cab out of the property and back to the yard to refit it to the tanker.





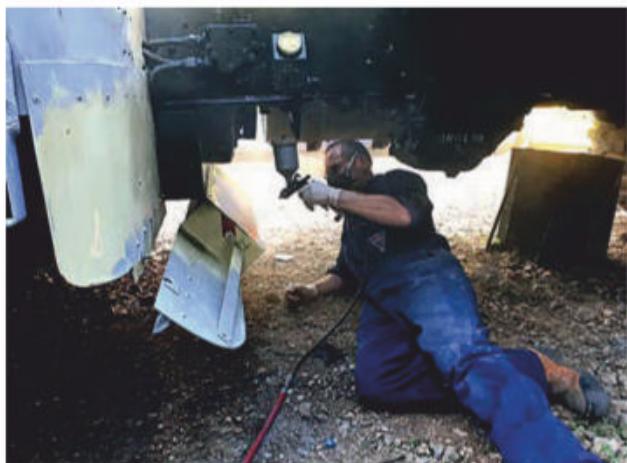
▲ Rob's two Militants, together in the works yard.

immaculate example of a gun tractor in desert sand colours and marked out to the 47th Royal Artillery Regiment. When it re-appeared twelve years later, in green, in our specialist's barn, it was still carrying its large 47 stencilling; it has since become a bit of a mystery. On the door, it now also carried a FVRDE project number of 4332 and this same number appears in a photograph of an early prototype vehicle shown in the FVRDE 1956 sales catalogue (without any registration numbers) but carrying that 4332 number on its door. It was being rallied in 2005 and it was believed to have been sold to the Crouch operation at some time. As this Militant is numbered in the first production

run, it is possible that this is a prototype built for evaluation but was then integrated into the first production order. However, the number could have been applied with wishful thinking by a fanciful owner in those 'missing' intervening 17 years! Anybody know more?

Six other individuals spring to mind when Militants are discussed, and it is Andy Lambert who leads this list with his much-loved, converted Militant Mark One recovery tractor. So much so that she has her own dedicated website [www.millytant.com](http://www.millytant.com)

Having been born between December 1953 and February 1954, chassis number 0860 039, a 6 x 6 General Service Cargo spent most of its military life being stored for future use as 36 BM 73 but was sold off in 1966 with very low mileage on its clock. Acquired by London Transport as the basis for its first Master Breakdown Tender, what was to become London Transport Master Recovery Unit 1456 MR, run on trade plates 559 LC, was dispatched to Boughtons of Amersham for the fitting-up of a ten-ton crane and recovery equipment. It served LT at Camberwell for 14



▲ Rob gets down to spraying the exhaust deflector, under-chassis damage to this part gave a lot of trouble on refitting.



▲ Rob's son Stuart, a well-qualified Scania Truck technician by trade, starts the monumental task of masking up the Militant Tanker with last week's newspapers and a lot of tape.



▲ The tanker gets near to the paint-spraying stage.



▲ These two shots give some idea of the amount of work to do just one piece of kit, the ministry instrument panel as it was taken off...



▲ ....after restoration, even the stencilling on the main panel must be sourced, the original mileage of 22,533 is still showing.

years before being made redundant in 1980. It was one of two to follow this course of events. 1457 MR was similarly treated, except this was chassis 0859 078, a 6 x 4 cargo, 36 BM 12. Built in March 1953 off the same military contract, 6V/8238, for 200 Militants, this order had been split in two to produce 100 all-wheel drive and the same in double bogie drive. Both the LT Militants were saved, originally by the same enthusiast, but in 1981, 1456, the all-wheel drive Milly, was sold on and met her knight in shining armour in the form of Andy Lambert who bought her and in 1983 set her to work for his National Rescue Group to recover casualties on the notorious A3 road and M25 motorway.

Repainting her in brown and cream NRG livery, she served the company well, but was slow to get to the RTA, so when she was replaced in 1988 by a DAF, Andy bought her for himself and put her out to pasture at the Brooklands Museum in Surrey, where she



▲ ....Fifteen years later, the same Militant 36 BM 64 appears in storage with a Norfolk collector and carrying FVRDE project numbers. Picture © Millhouse Archive

still continues to work, lifting airframes and making guest appearances at events involving the London Bus Museum, which is also based there. Her sister, 1457 MR, has also gone back to work and has been registered Q 888 FLE, recovering buses for the Essex company, Blue Triangle, but it has now moved on to an enthusiast-run railway company.

The second Militant is from the North East of England first seen by us when REC 931 V appeared at the Durham Light Infantry Museum rally at August Bank Holiday, organised by the North East Military Vehicle Group; one of the few Militants then to be seen at rallies in the North.

Gun tractor, REC, was employed as a snowplough in Upper Teesdale and was, quite naturally, painted bright yellow. It was bought in 1989 with serious bodywork corrosion from both the effects of the salt and from standing out in extreme weather. Both the cab and rear body had to be replaced. The covered section now houses a very large generator which makes it a useful vehicle at events and rallies; it was/is owned by the Pattison family of Ovingham, Northumberland.

Next month, more Militant restorers tell their stories. ♦

▼ Militant, REC 910 V, stands alone on a hill at the Durham Light Infantry Museum during an NEMVC event on August Bank holiday 1998. Picture © Millhouse Archive



▲ London Transport Militant, 1457 MR, on trade plates, 587 LB, pulls a single-decker bus into its Cricklewood garage base. Picture courtesy: Andy Lambert



▲ "Millytant", now in private hands in National Rescue Group, still working but lifting vintage aircraft prototype Harrier VSTOL fuselage at its current Brooklands Museum base. Picture courtesy: Andy Lambert





# BOGIE'S BONNY BELLE

The north of Scotland has a proud history of haulage and is home to some of the best organised road runs in Scotland. Bob Weir met up with George Murison, who likes nothing better than getting behind the wheel of an old lorry.

**G**eorge hails from Huntly a small town in Aberdeenshire. The town was formerly known as Milton of Strathbogie and is home to Huntly castle. George has lived in the area all his life and is a lorry driver to trade.

"I first started driving in 1959, and I passed my test behind the wheel of an Austin K4," he recalls. "My father had a local scrap metal business and owned a few lorries. As I recall they were mostly Bedfords, including the 'O' type. I also remember driving a Kew Dodge, and in later years' lorries like the Leyland Lynx. I've also worked for other local companies and have been driving commercial vehicles for

over 60 years."

George has also been collecting for many years, and his first old lorry was a Thames Trader.

"I started collecting in the 1990s, and as I recall the Trader was a local lorry," he said.

"The Thames needed a bit of a makeover, and I usually do my own restorations."

George is a big fan of road runs, and the Trader was soon earning its keep.

"I have a caravan that I tow behind the lorry, and my wife and I used to go all over the place," he said. "I kept the Trader for a few years and took it to rallies as far

south as England. Back in those days they were mostly British lorries turning up to shows, and you didn't see many European models. The road runs and rallies became a bit of a hobby, and over the years we have made a lot of friends."

George eventually replaced the Trader with another local lorry, a Leyland Super Comet.

"The Super Comet came from the town of Wick, up by John O'Groats," he explained. "The lorry had been used for many years working around the north-east of

**Restoring the lorry took a lot of man hours, but the Albion has already won several rosettes.**





George Murison.

Scotland. The vehicle traded hands a few times, before my brother bought the lorry with the intention of giving it a makeover. Unfortunately, he had nowhere to store the Leyland, and ended up selling it to me."

George recalls that driving the Super Comet was more fun than the Trader.



◀ ▲ George is a man of many talents and built the flatbed himself. ▼





▲ George hard at work in the early 1980s.

"The Thames could only manage 40mph on a good day, which is quite a low cruising speed especially in today's busy traffic," said George. "By contrast, the Super Comet would easily do up to 70mph. This was mainly because I replaced the original five-speed gearbox with a six-speed unit. This acted as an overdrive and made all the difference. Fortunately, my son George is a full-time mechanic to trade, and helped me with the changeover. The Leyland was particularly good for road runs, and I kept the lorry for several years."

George's next lorry was an Austin FFK 140. The lorry was originally new to Scottish & Newcastle breweries, and based at their headquarters in Edinburgh. It worked out of there for many years, before being moved

south to the company's depot in Dumfries. When it was sold on by the brewery the lorry is believed to have remained in the area, where it was used as a cattle float. The Austin was then bought by local farmers' H & M Hastings in 1973 and repainted in their green livery. The lorry continued working until the 1980s when it was laid up. The Austin was eventually acquired by well-known Scottish enthusiast, the Late Frank MacDougall from Moscow in Ayrshire.

"Frank was hoping to restore the lorry, but he had a lot of other projects on the go," George recalls. "When I was down in Ayrshire, I paid him a visit and he offered me the lorry on the spot. We shook hands on the arrangement, and I had a local haulage friend deliver it up to Huntly. I restored the lorry and rallied it for several years, before moving it on."

George has bought and sold several lorries over the years, but the one item he always retains is the tow bar.

"I suppose the bar has been on six or seven lorries, but I always take it off when I move a vehicle on so I can continue to tow our



▲ This Austin FFK140 used to be a dray lorry.



▲ The state of the cab might have deterred many potential restorers.



▲ According to George the Thames Trader was reliable, but a bit on the slow side.

caravan," he laughed. "My wife and I enjoy using the caravan, as it's ideal for staying overnight at shows."

Frank MacDougall and George had been pals for many years, and Frank also offered him his Albion FT27 4-tonner.

"I've currently got a couple of old Albion lorries on the go, and one of the vehicles is still in bits," he explained. "GM 5482 was a bit of a wreck when I got it and the lorry has had a full nut and bolts restoration.

"The lorry was originally registered with the number plate JRG 210 to the storage and removal company Clark and Rose based in Aberdeen. The company has a long history dating back to 1906 and is still trading. This also meant that the Albion would have been fitted out as a removal van. The lorry was still wearing what remained of its body, but this was in such bad condition that it was stripped off and thrown away.

"The lorry was eventually sold on to a showman, before being acquired by the Late Tom Murray who lived near Albion's spiritual home in Biggar. By all accounts Tom was a big Albion fan, and had quite a collection. Frank ended up buying the lorry from Tom's daughter in 2013. He needed a few spare parts for one of his own restoration projects and wanted to use the Albion as a donor vehicle. He offered me the rest of the lorry, and I decided to have a go at restoring it."

George likes a challenge and GM 5482



▲ An atmospheric photo of the Albion on the back of Frank MacDougall's prize-winning Johnny Walker Commer.

certainly threw down the gauntlet.

"As you can see from the old photographs, the Albion needed a lot of work," he said. "The lorry had to be completely stripped down to its nuts and bolts. Fortunately, my brother-in-law Charlie Morrison decided to give me a hand. The cab was particularly difficult and threw up a lot of challenges. I would say that the whole job took the best part of two years."

George has learned a lot about restoration projects over the years and reckons that the key to a successful makeover is good preparation.

"I've found it's best to get everything you need to hand before you start work, so the makeover can proceed at a steady pace," he explained. "The lorry also needs to be stored out of the weather as conditions can get fairly rough in the north-east of Scotland, particularly during the winter months."

Getting spares for old Albion lorries is becoming increasingly difficult, and George's Albion is a vehicle of many different parts.

"Frank had accumulated a lot of Albion spares over the years, and agreed to help me out," he recalls. "I would be working on the lorry most days between 10am in the morning and 3pm in the afternoon. In the end I decided not to replace the removal van body and built a flatbed itself. I had done a similar thing with some of my previous lorries, and it worked out fine. All the wood was sourced locally, and I took my time putting it together. The restoration slowly took shape, until it was time to give the lorry a fresh coat of paint."

George usually does his own paintwork but, on this occasion, he got a helping hand.

"Another one of my friends called Ronnie had brought round some specialist tools to help me shape the cab," he recalls. "He asked me how I was going to paint the Albion and offered to do the job himself. I said to him 'one volunteer is better than ten conscripts', and gratefully accepted his offer. The lorry's sign work was done by local craftsman Barry Driver."

Fortunately for George, Ronnie is a professional coachbuilder and used a spray gun.

"I prefer using a spray gun to hand painting as it usually gives a better finish," he said. "The new coat of paint turned out a treat, and the lorry was soon winning rosettes at local shows. For obvious reasons, Albion lorries are very popular with Scottish enthusiasts, and my 1954 vehicle has been well received."

George likes to name his lorries and "Bogies Bonny Belle" is the title of a famous Scottish folk song about a feisty love affair in the Huntly area. He says that the lorry is fun to drive, but that the original engine was underpowered especially for today's road conditions.

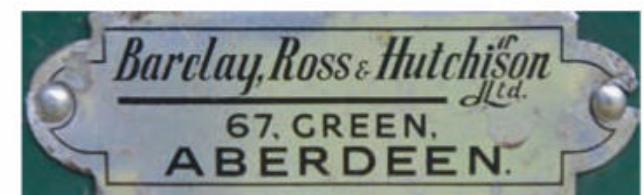
"The smallest engine Albion produced back in the old days was the diesel EN 218," he said. "The unit was so underpowered it wouldn't pull your bonnet off! I eventually decided to replace it with a 5.5 litre EN335 and six speed gearbox used by later Chieftain models like the CH3A. This made a big difference to the lorry's performance. I plan to keep the lorry for the foreseeable future, but at my age you never



▲ The cab was also extensively restored.



▲ This Albion engine from Manchester waits patiently for its latest lorry.



▲ The original dealer's nameplate adds to the lorry's provenance.



▲ As he is still rallying the lorry, George also fitted a fresh set of tyres.



▲ The Albion had a lucky escape and was almost broken up for spares. Fortunately, George rescued the lorry for posterity.



▲ Lovely bit of signwriting.



▲ A nod to its Scottish roots.

know what is around the corner."

Although George is in his seventies, his restoration days are far from over. Although GM 5482 has been restored, he still has two Albion lorries which are works in progress.

## — A brief history of early Albion 1950s lorries —

By 1950 all of Albion's diesel trucks including the Clansman, Chieftain and Clydesdale series had received a makeover. This included fitting a new front panel, and recessed headlights. Following on from this, in 1953 the company launched the new Claymore. This was available in two versions, the FT25 (3 tonner) and FT27 (4 tonner). These replaced the FT21 and FT23 petrol-engined models.

The Claymore was the first new model to be introduced under Leyland ownership, and featured a vertically positioned engine. The Albion EN218B diesel engine also became available. Leyland's influence was evident in many areas, including a Leyland clutch and four-speed gearbox. By contrast the chassis was like the Claymore's petrol-engined predecessor, apart from the curved

dash that was adopted from the Chieftain.

In 1953, Albion had also introduced a factory fitted cab option on certain models. These included the Chieftain, Clydesdale and Claymore, which all shared the same curved dash and styled radiator. The cab was made by Autolifts and Engineering Company Ltd of Blackburn in Lancashire, who had already acquired a reputation for their vehicle bodies and tipping gear. The cabs were made from pressed steel.

In 1955, some Leyland-engined lorries were given the new code letter PF. Although a five-speed gearbox remained standard, the following year an Albion six-speed unit became available on all models in the FT/PF range. This increased the top speed by 30%, and saved fuel.

Now that he can no longer rely on Frank MacDougall, he has discovered other ways of sourcing spare parts, including scouring the adverts in *Heritage Commercials* magazine.

"I found an enthusiast down in Manchester who was in possession of a few Albion spares," George recalls. "These included a couple of engines and a back end. Unfortunately, I had problems getting the parts delivered back up to Scotland. I tried a few haulage firms in Aberdeen, but they weren't really interested.

"Luckily I had just sold a BMC back end to

an enthusiast down in Warrington. He wanted to drive up to Huntly to take delivery of the part and agreed to stop by in Manchester and bring my Albion spares in his van. This solved my problem at a stroke. It's funny how these things eventually work out, but that's part and parcel of lorry restorations." ♦

▼ George's recently restored FT Series. The lorry has now been fitted with a later Chieftain engine and gearbox.



# VW VAN FROM NEW ZEALAND



Otto was the only vehicle in the Wrights Hill car park when this photo was taken. A few minutes earlier and he'd have been caught up with cars from a Wellington Vintage Car Club rally.

**Otto is New Zealander**  
**Andy Bray's 1965 Type 2 Volkswagen**  
**panel van. His full name is Otto von Vannington.**

**V**olkswagen called the rear engine van the Type 2 to differentiate from the Type 1 or Beetle saloon. The company's forward control light commercial vehicle range dates from 1950.

When Andy and his wife Ali were discussing possible names for the VW, they said they liked *Otto*. Ali hopped on to the personalised plates website and found *Otto* was available, and that is how *Otto* got his plates.

*Otto* came to New Zealand CKD (completely knocked down) from Germany for assembly at VW Motors (formerly Motor Holdings), in Otahuhu,

**“He bought *Otto* from a Wellingtonian who'd purchased *Otto* in Christchurch”**

Auckland. His birth certificate shows he was manufactured on 10 September 1964 and left the factory for New Zealand on 11 September 1964. Because Volkswagen's 1965 production year started in September 1964, *Otto* is classed as a 1965 model. He has always been a right-hand drive.

Andy has no ownership papers to confirm *Otto*'s early history, although he believes his van started out as a delivery vehicle for a grocer in rural Oamaru, a town in the South Island.

He bought *Otto* from a Wellingtonian who'd purchased *Otto* in Christchurch, and sent the van to a specialist VW restorer in the city. In his workshop, *Otto* was stripped bare and all the rusty sheet metal replaced – full floors, sills, door bottoms and jacking points etc. “They all rust in the same places,” Andy says. There was no rust prevention in the 1960s before Volkswagen vans were spray painted and left the factory.

Then the 2011 Christchurch earthquake intervened, and the previous owner

shipped *Otto* to Wellington. More metal work was done at The Surgery in Porirua, but the project stalled before he listed *Otto* on TradeMe, a New Zealand internet auction website.



▲ *Otto* full frontal.



Volkswagen enthusiast Andy Bray with the dossier he prepared to make *Otto*'s reregistration easier.



Right side profile.

Andy won the auction, making the decision to buy sight unseen from the online photos. He says it came into his ownership with a combination of surface rust, because it had been bare metal for some time, and primer. The purchase included some parts in boxes. In his ownership, 'The Surgery' finished the panel beating and spray painted the van.

When *Otto* was pushed into Andy's garage for the first time, a surprise awaited

him: there was just 20mm clearance.

He sourced and bought good used parts that he could refurbish, wherever possible during the restoration. They are Andy's preferences, even though some, like the door handles have a few scratches. When reproduction parts became necessary, he tried to use local suppliers.

Restoration took four years, from purchase to registering and warranting. Andy is unsure how long the van had

remained unregistered. A registration sticker and the JU8038 number plate showed the vehicle had been registered in 1984. When NZ Transport Agency's computerised registration system was created between 1990 and 1995, JU8038 was not listed. But the plate and registration sticker showed the vehicle had once been registered in New Zealand and made re-registration easier, as did the proof that the van was a New Zealand



▲ Andy Bray at the wheel in *Otto*.



▲ The dashboard, white painted steering wheel, and under dashboard storage shelves.



▲ Inside the cab area the seats have seat belts fitted which would not have been there when *Otto* was new in 1965.

**“Otto is no longer painted his original off-white, nor has he the grey vinyl front seats”**

vehicle. This enabled Andy to register *Otto* as a 1965 model.

Since being registered and warranted, *Otto* had done more than 1000 kilometres (600+ miles), when Andy was interviewed for this article. “It’s probably as much as it has done in the past 30 years,” he says. The fuel consumption is 25mpg.

His dad Dave helped him build and fit the 1960s era 1600cc motor that replaces the original 1500cc. They did this at Dave’s garage, where there was more room to work. Before the engine came to Andy’s for fitting, all the required underpinnings – suspension, brakes, steering, gearbox etc, – had been finished. He remembers working with his dad on this project as “a great father/son experience over quite some months.”

What I didn’t realise – until I saw Ross de Rouffignac taking the photos – is that the rear bumper is removable, and that the hinged panel with the rear number plate provides access to the slide out engine by turning a large key in the lock. The same key unlocks the petrol tank cap, too.

*Otto* is no longer painted his original off-white, nor has he the grey vinyl front seats. Andy repainted the VW red and ivory. The red is an off the chart colour that is close to Volkswagen’s sealing wax red, and doesn’t require mixing if any repainting is required.

Seats are covered in a patterned brocade of a similar colour to the bodywork,



▲ The exterior door handles are originals which Andy prefers to reproduction parts.



▲ The wheels are painted gold.



▲ The open rear door with the hinged engine cover and rear number plate underneath.



▲ With the table removed and the back seat flattened, as in the photo, *Otto* easily carried a queen-size bed when the Brays’ daughter recently shifted flats.



▲ When the stool, table, and bed (back seat) including base are removed, *Otto* is a van again.



◀ The motor built from parts and fitted by Andy and his dad Dave.

▼ Nearside profile of *Otto*.





▲ Both the driver and the passenger sides of the van have adjustable mirrors fitted.

which also has gold and olive green in the design. Ali had bought the material in a sale because she liked the colours, not dreaming that it would end up in a van.

Andy and Ali Bray plan to use *Otto* as a camper. The table is removable so the seat can fold out to a bed, and the seat box itself comes out by unscrewing four bolts. With table and bed removed, *Otto* is a van again.

Andy built the joinery in this area and laid the rubber matting and carpets here and throughout the van. The removable table's leg is two bedside table legs

**“It is surprisingly light in the back with no side windows, as I found out .... from the photo shoot”**



▲ The wide opening driver's door with the sliding window open.

joined together his parents' original bedroom suite.

Impressions from the drive to Wellington's Wrights Hill for the photos: comfortable seating that supports the back, and a smooth ride that was firmer than expected from a vehicle without a motor in the front. I didn't find the motor noisy going uphill. The view from the front windscreens gives the driver and the front seat passengers good vision. Andy says although the windscreens are flat, the new wipers don't wipe to the windscreens' edges.

It is surprisingly light in the back with no side windows, as I found out on the way back from the photo shoot. "I didn't want to cut windows into it because it has happened to so many of them," Andy says. He adds that when these vans are restored, the added windows can be replaced by the original panels.

When we were at the photo shoot, a man came over and complimented Andy on the van. Andy and Ali Bray can expect a whole lot more of this when they're travelling in *Otto*. He really does look the goods. ♦

▼ *Otto* with the left side doors open ready to be prepared for work or holiday.





# COMMERCIALS ABOUND AT CAUSSADE



Saviem SG4 2.5 payload Galion roots go back to 1957, but the Super Galion came along in 1970 and this six-ton example carries the Saviem/Renault 3.32 litre four-cylinder diesel engine with MAN direct injection equipment. It was another successful model for the company who were making more commercials in France than most at the time.

If you want to get the full feel of the French vintage vehicle movement then Tractomania at the town of Caussade 1.5 hours north of Toulouse on the outer edge of a very mountainous area of France and is the place to go says Peter Love.

**N**ow in its 29th year and held on 19-20 October, one can describe the event as the French equivalent to our Beaulieu Autojumble, which has been going incredibly 50 years in 2019. However, Tractomania is held in the centre of Caussade is free to get in and features, steam, tractor, horticultural, stationary engines, car, motor-cycle parts, many pedal cars and of course full size machines of all types for sale or just on show. There is a large hall here full of literature, memorabilia, models including commercials and more.

At the top end of the town there was a large display of cars, trucks, large stationary engines, steam, road rollers, horticultural and more! This year there were at least another 30 new stands having taken over more of the SNCF station yard by the looks of it. There are plenty

► Renault S130 is a type that the French company introduced in 1985 and had its roots in Saviem a name not used before 1957 of course. Renault started building vans in 1900 were famous for placing the radiator behind the engine. We see the very crude Hungarian 1953 HSCS G model single-cylinder tractor that's for sale on board.

of places to eat and drink and the weather can be changeable, but on the whole the sun appears over the weekend at some time!

The French have various machinery museums of course, but have been very slow in taking up vehicle and preservation to the extent we do and it's not in the proportions that we know of. In fact, some museums that were well established have now been dispersed through age and time.

However, they have an interesting taxation scheme and this does not help people to disclose actually what's in the barn!

Preservation prices in France is not what it has been in the UK and it has been strong pickings for UK dealers over the years, however much has changed over the last two years owing to Brexit unfortunately and the fall of the pound against the Euro and the market picking up in





▲ Well loaded up is the smaller Renault SG3, which had its roots in the 1957 Saviem of course.

France making it expensive to buy for British dealers. From my observation much of the restoration is very lightweight and keeping it original looks to be the way they like it. This is a trend that has made great strides in the UK and Ireland over the last few years particularly in the classic market.

As for Health and Safety well it's still anything goes! With hardly any ropes, barriers with huge feet that you can fall over easily if you are not careful, but it's up to you! I loved

it as the machines moved with public freely around! But one trader got caught out on the Friday afternoon when the large and heavy €150 priced anvil (blood included) he was removing from his trailer crushed his foot badly from a great height leaving his foot in a horrible state and was taken off in the ambulance.

In all, approximately 150 of all types of tractors were offered for sale in one shape or another. Plus a number of commercial vehicles



▲ Seen near the SNCF Caussade railway station is the Hotchkiss PL25 with the Perkins P4 diesel engine in very good order and for sale. Hotchkiss were a famous car manufacture who did not take up making trucks until the mid 30s.



▲ There is always plenty of signage to go for here in the autojumble section of the show.

and cars that is growing year by year. As we have said before, quite a few loads come back to the UK each year, but this year just two vehicles looked to be the total amount coming back. Not helped as I say by the higher prices wanted for the stock these days and it cost the operator £2,000 gating here and back so it's not cheap.

There was a whole raft of commercial vehicles on show and for sale mostly of the smaller variety, and nothing will be the same



▲ Great to see the Peugeot 205 Gruau Multi XA van here is owned by one of the traders and is certainly something different. The popular 205 model was made famous by its rallying exploits and was produced from 1983-1998.



▲ What a rare sight today a Leyland Sherpa van dropside in very original condition.



▲ Looking good the front-wheel drive Renault Estafette 12cwt panel van. It was to be the first Renault FWD vehicle. It came on the scene in 1959 as part of an initial six model range with the 845cc Dauphine petrol engine that later went to 1.3 litres with four-speed transmission and independent suspension all-round and was made successfully to 1980.

next year, it always changes here. Where would you see a left-hand drive Leyland Sherpa dropside in wonderful condition and a for sale 1959 Hotchkiss PL25 2.5 tonne with Perkins P4 engine fitted that had brought a load in?

Staying at the top end of the town was the real thing in a genuine older restored maroon and cream 1919 Citroën 10-12hp four-cylinder sv engine tractor, one of approximately 700 made by the company and interestingly features unit construction and a few have lasted into preservation. Not far from it was a horde of Citroën 1930s trucks (including a 1939 T23), coaches and cars. This included the pioneering front-wheel drive Traction Avant in van format of all things. In fact, the Traction Avant was still being made post war and a good number were sold in the UK via the Citroen Slough works, when you get down to it, that was right by the British Railways later National Carriers engine recondition centre.

But there were also lots of Simca, Renault, Peugeot and Panhard commercials as the huge multi-cylindered stationary engines were fired up along with the Packard-Merlin engine with no barriers around any of them as such, the huge crowd enjoyed it all as I did!

I have to say we were very lucky with the weather even if some sprinkles of rain were felt on occasions, but on the two days I was at the show we ended taking layers off and were able to enjoy late sunshine both days! On the Saturday night most of the British contingent gathered together in the cafe by the secret truck stop down the road where for €14 we had a five course meal that certainly filled us up! Sadly, on the Sunday it was the normal heavy showers, but by then we were up to other things. All told it was an excellent event and I was able to come away with a number of items for myself for a change. ♦



▲ Laffly made fire engines and trucks from 1922 and they used CLM two-stroke diesel engine in the 30s. This type of Laffly is typical of the just post war era for the company.



▲ Looking cool is the excellent condition 1958 Peugeot 403 long wheel base estate unloading at the top of the town.



▲ It was in 1955 Peugeot came out with the 403 with its four-speed column change four-speed transmission and the 'Commerciale' was all part of that famous range into the early 1960s when the 404U came along.



There was just about everything here even a dumper that was regularly run up!

# RUSH GREEN MOTORS

Rush Green Motors' scrapyard in Langley, Hertfordshire is a treasure trove of old lorries from the 1950s onwards. Pip Dunn took a look around and was amazed at some of the relics there....



▲ Seddon Atkinson 400 with a day cab on a T-plate, dates from 1979.



▲ An original Mk 1 Volvo F10 – or it could be an F12 – is missing its doors, grilles and most of its useful parts.



▲ Seddon Atkinson 3-11 4x2 tractor unit; a regular at 32 tonnes. This one still has all its cab glass in, which will protect the insides a bit.



▲ Another grounded cab was this one from an old Magirus Deutz 232D30 8x4 chassis, most likely a tipper.



▲ This old BMC, which uses the same cab used by Leyland for many of its mid-weight range in the 1970s, is still in the livery of long-lost brewery Mitchells and Butlers.



▲ Tough Bedford TM 4-4 looks like it could be resurrected with the right know how.



▲ The Renault TR280 was not necessarily a best seller in the UK, but nevertheless was a good truck for long distance work.



▲ An A-series ERF tractor unit with a converted 'pigeon loft' sleeper cab. These were a common sight in the mid-1970s as hauliers modified day cabs to have the most basic of bunks.



▲ No more long distance tramping for this old Ford Transcontinental.



▲ Volvo FL6 urban artics were popular as dray trucks; this example looks like it could run again with a bit of loving restoration?



▲ The Bedford TL was a popular middle-weight truck in the 1980s; this example was registered in 1985 and still looks like it has its original paint.

▼ Old Leyland DAFs side by side; an 80.260 8x4 tipper and a 50.130 road sweeper.



# AEC

## THE COMMERCIAL VEHICLES FROM SOUTHALL

Vintage Roadscene Archives Series Publication



AEC made this new Y-Type lorry available to the publishers of The Commercial Motor magazine (published by The Temple Press of Bowling Green Lane, EC1, available in those days every Tuesday for three pence – or '3d' as it would be at the time) to get some favourable publicity in return. Here 'LU 8694' was posed brand new outside the AEC factory in Walthamstow, with some still to be completed chassis in the background.

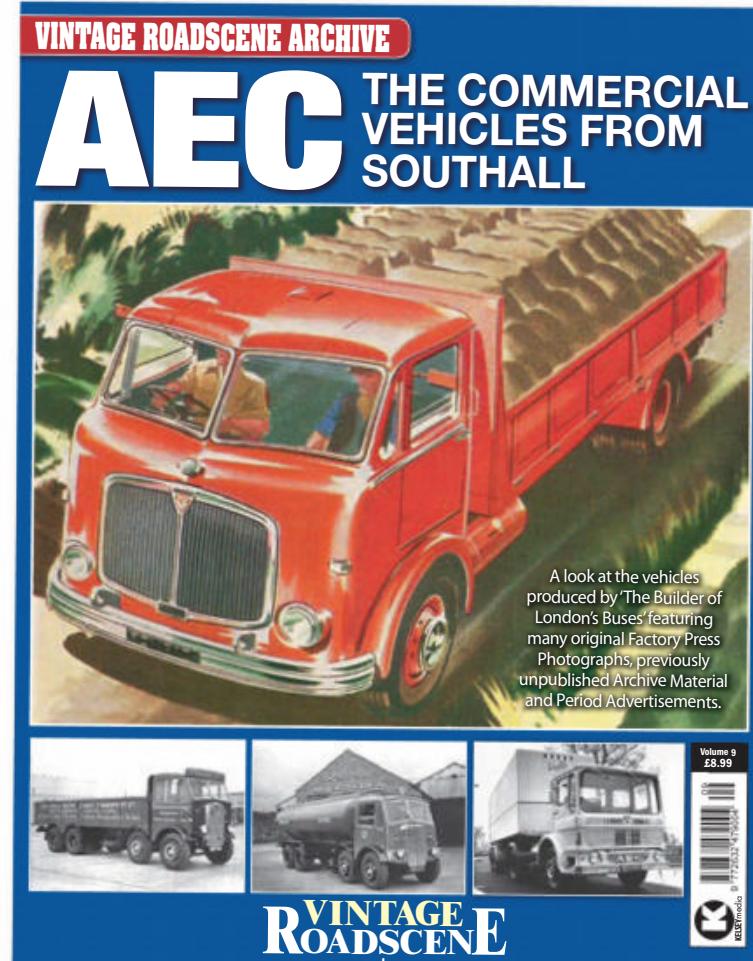
Mike Forbes previews the latest issue in the Vintage Roadscene Archive series, a look at the vehicles produced by 'The Builder of London's Buses' featuring many original factory press photographs, previously unpublished archive material, including period advertisements.

This is a largely pictorial history of the commercial vehicles built by the 'Associated Equipment Company, from its beginnings to the end of production under British Leyland, using over 300 archive pictures. These were sourced with the assistance of Raymond Walls, of the Motoring Memories Heritage Museum, Ballygowan, Co Down, Northern Ireland and were mostly taken for AEC for promotional purposes over the years, showing a fascinating range of lorries, from the earliest on solid tyres, along with many classics from the 1930s, wartime and the early post-war years, plus what is called here 'the tin-front era', to the later Ergomatics, produced alongside

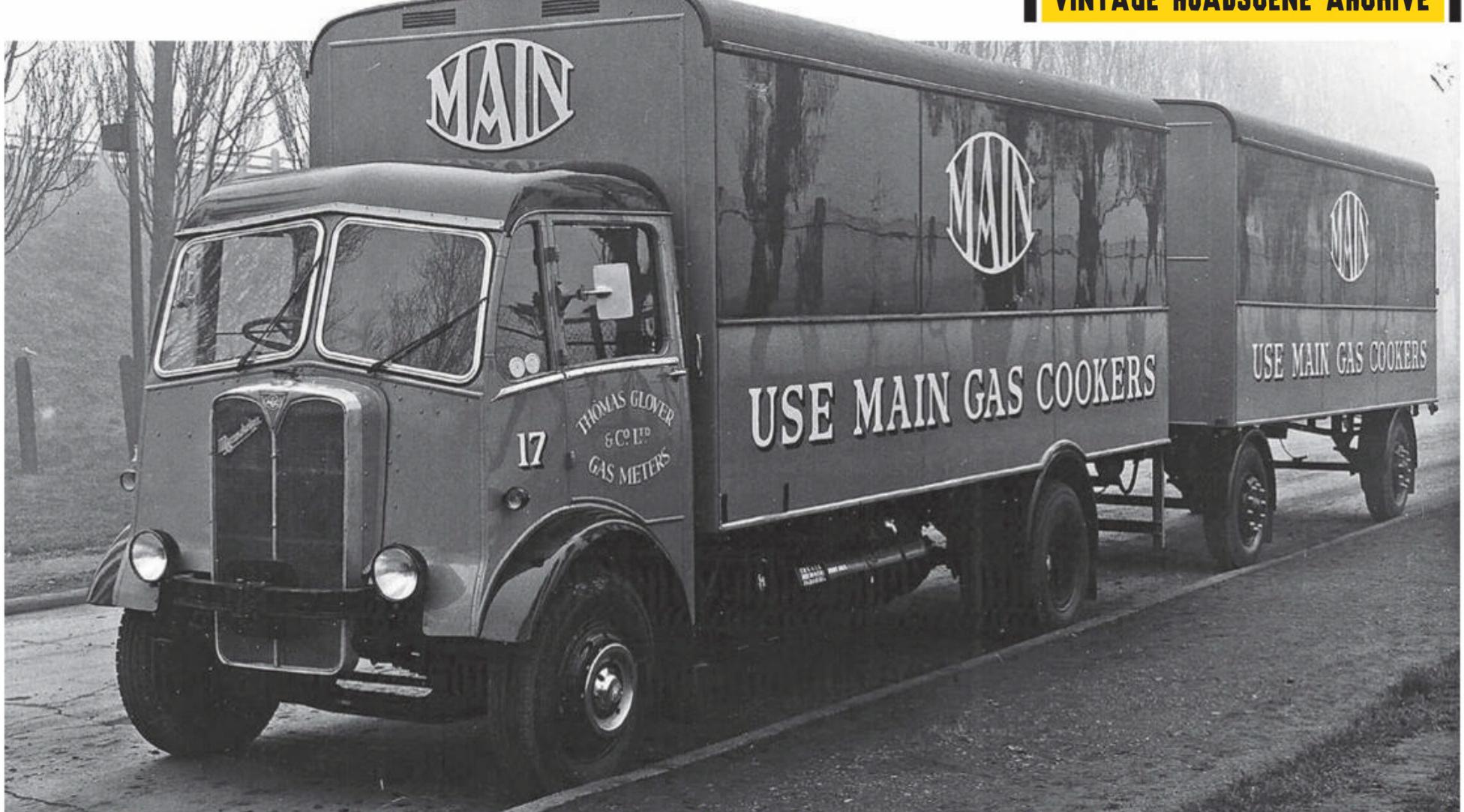
similar vehicles from Leyland and Albion, not forgetting dump-trucks and buses.

Along with the pictures, which show the fascinating development – and in some cases, lack of it – the publication features a discussion of the different types produced over the years. AEC's engineering was considered by many to be second to none for many years, with advances in chassis, engine and driveline design, although the company could be criticised for not providing an in-house cab for longer than nearly any other lorry manufacturer.

Author Malcolm Bates asks why this was and argues that it held the company



back from the late 1950s until the Sankey-made Ergomatic replaced the coachbuilt cabs which, in most cases, the supplying dealer or intending operator of the lorry had to arrange



▲ Here's what was described as a 'Matador II', in service with a drawbar trailer. In this case, it was delivering new 'Main' gas cookers (and meters?) manufactured by Thomas Main & Co. The complete 'ensemble' was painted and ready to 'go home', but had yet to receive its registration plates. The caption on the reverse suggests that by now (1953), this model should have been known as a 'Mandator' not a Matador. The chassis was powered by a 9.6 litre diesel, producing 125bhp, and we're told that all the bodywork was undertaken by the long-established London coachbuilder, Glover Webb & Liversidge – including the cab. The van bodywork featured a removable second floor and was loaded by an early Burtonwood tail-lift. Apparently, up to 150 gas cookers or 2250 gas meters could be carried.

▼ There is a section on buses, which includes this picture. The radiator tells us that this was an early AEC Reliance single deck bus chassis that was bodied as a pantechnicon van for Hammonds of Hull. It dates from the time when AEC had renewed an agreement with Daimler to market some models as 'Associated Daimlers'.



▲ Taken in the same spot as many other AECs in the factory archives, for AEC distributor, Owald Tillotson, Herbert Smart's 6x4 Mammoth looks... well, pretty smart, with some traditional 'lining out' of the cab and platform body.

to have built on the bare chassis. He further puts forward the opinion that the Ergo might have originally been intended for just AEC and asks whether the investment in this had affected the supposedly healthy financial position of AEC, forcing the company to enter talks with Leyland in the early 1960s, which led to AEC becoming much the minor partner, when British Leyland was formed to take over so much of the British automotive industry a few years later.

This 'bookazine', with its many pictures of AEC lorries, both at home and abroad, many not seen by enthusiasts for many years, if at all, will please fans of the marque and possibly win the products of Southall new friends. ♦



“ This ‘bookazine’, with its many pictures of AEC lorries.....will please fans of the marque and possibly win the products of Southall new friends. ”

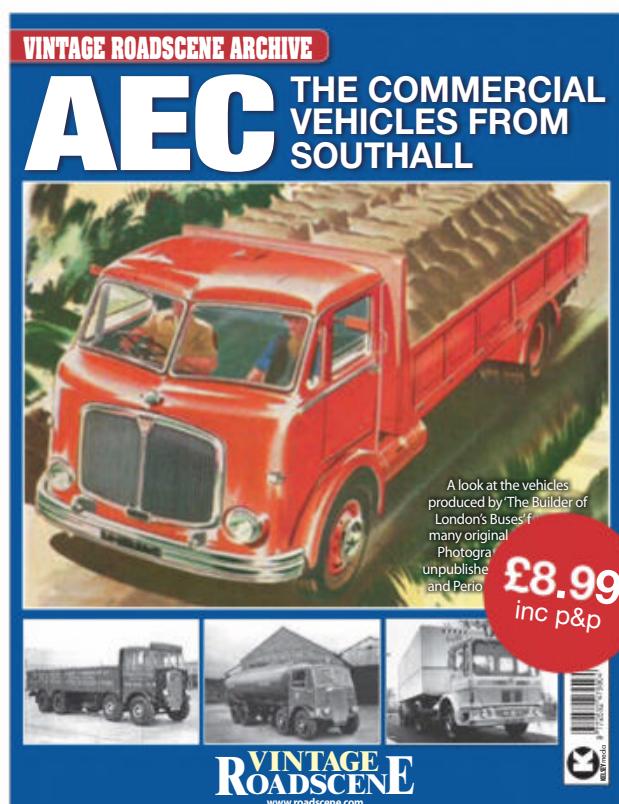
► This publication includes an in-depth look at the Ergomatic-cabbed AEC models. In 1969, steel stockholder, William Watts Limited of Nottingham, had just taken delivery of a new Mercury platform lorry with front and rear bolsters, to take over-length sections of channel and I-beam section steel.

▼ For many years, AEC enjoyed a healthy export market. Darling & Hodgson was based in South Africa and seems to have had wide interests in construction and infrastructure projects. This Mammoth Major was fitted with a tipping body with twin underfloor tipping rams and a cab with ‘suicide’ rear-opening doors.



# VINTAGE ROADSCENE ARCHIVE

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## AEC THE COMMERCIAL VEHICLES FROM SOUTHALL

This pictorial led history of the commercial vehicles built by the Associated Equipment Company, from its beginnings to the end of production under British Leyland, uses over 300 archive pictures which were mostly taken for AEC for promotional purposes, showing a fascinating range of lorries, from the earliest on solid tyres, along with many classics from the 1930s, wartime and the early post-war years, plus what is called here 'the tin-front era', to the later Ergometrics, produced alongside similar vehicles from Leyland and Albion, not forgetting dump-trucks and buses.

Please note: 'Vintage Roadscene Archive' is a continuation of the previous 'Road Haulage Archive' series and this is the 29th title published so far. You can buy individual copies at WH Smith and other high street retailers, order singles copies, including back issues, from the publisher, or take out a subscription - see website for full details.

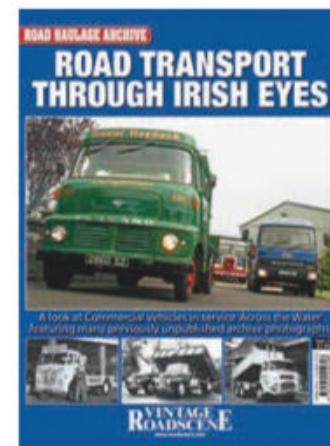
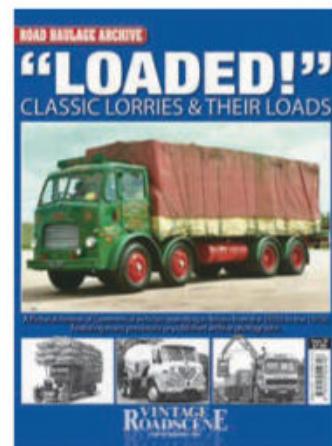
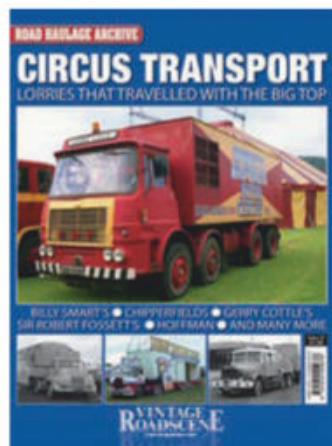
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## FORD THAMES ET6

**R**ead the article in a recent edition of *Heritage Commercials*, about the Newark Show and the nice photo of the ET6, I often see photographs of this design mentioned as the ET6 or the 4d, which very often is not correct.

Just after the war, Briggs Motor Bodies were in the process of bringing into production a cab for the Leyland Comet. At that time, Dodge were designing a new truck and were interested in the same cab for this and also Ford. After various negotiations all three decided to use this cab but all had front panel work and radiator to distinguish each make.

Ford Thames ET6.



Having the larger output, Ford paid for a lot of the tooling costs, hence the birth of the ET6 with the V8 petrol

engine and a Perkins P6 Diesel powered ET7 produced from March 1949.

In 1953, Ford had designed their own four-cylinder petrol engine the 500E Costcutter and later the well-known 502E 4D. The 4D was also fitted in the Fordson Major tractor I think before the trucks. All models used the same cylinder block. The ET designation then disappeared. The Costcutter had a round badge on the bonnet sides and the famous 4D badge on the radiator on the diesel. These vehicles for a while were being built at the same time as the new Trader but probably to use up all the spare parts.

I enclose photos of a Costcutter and ET6, the quality isn't great.

**Tony Smith**  
Doveridge, Derbyshire

◀ Ford Costcutter  
1955/56.



## WINDSCREEN WIPERS

I notice that restored old lorries have windscreen wipers on both sides, whereas when new, there would be no nearside wiper, only the one for the driver.

The latest example is the Foden DG 6/12 of 1948 featured in the December issue of *Heritage Commercials*.

Are two windscreen wipers now required because of the MOT test?

**Michael Cox**

*I think, if a vehicle is 40 years old or more, then an MOT is not necessary (readers will correct me if I am wrong), although some owners MOT their vehicles just to make sure they are fit for the road. Ed*

## LONG SHOT

**T**his is a long shot! But would any of the lovely readers of *Heritage Commercials* have any photos of the old haulage company Bartlett Brothers of Quay Road Teignmouth, South Devon from the 1970s-80s. My friend's dad who has sadly passed away, worked for them during this period! And he would love a photo of one or any of their lorries.

**Dave Eddy via email**

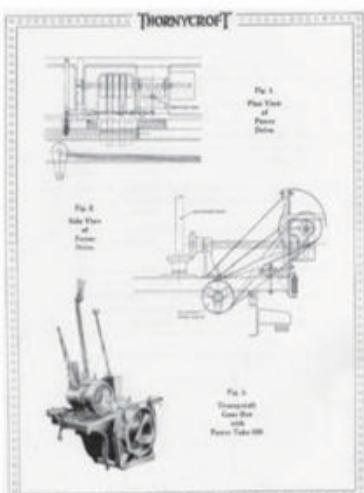
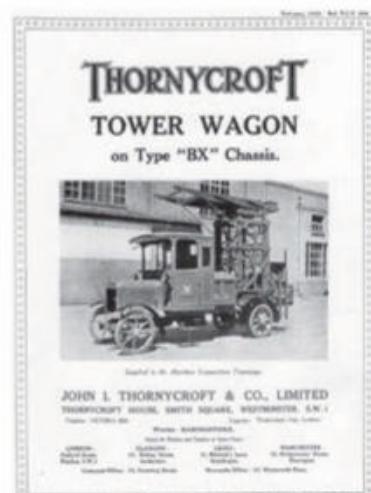
# TOWER WAGONS REVISITED

Subsequent to the article in the December issue of *Heritage Commercials*, on tower wagons, I recently purchased this leaflet and enclose copies of it (seen here).

Interestingly, the Aberdeen vehicle has a manual tower although Thornycroft would supply a power operated unit.

Bill Dawe, Australia

Thanks Bill, it is nice to see a feature still up your interest. Ed



Tower Wagon with the platform extended to approximately double the height.

There are Thornycroft Motor Vehicles for all kinds of Municipal Service: Gully Emptiers, Watering Wagons, End- or Side-Tipping Wagons, Cesspit Emptiers, and Multi-purpose Vehicles.

Full particulars of any of these types supplied on request.

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## SHELVOKE & DREWRY

On page 37 January issue, a photo of an SD Freighter is captioned as: 'Shelvoke Drewry electric dustcart evolved from their Freighter.' This is a common misunderstanding based, I believe, on the fact that the Freighter looks as though it could be electrically powered. It wasn't! With its transversely mounted engine and radiator on the side of the vehicle the mistake is easily made.

I have clear memories of an episode when a number of SD vehicles were



▲ Freighter.

displayed at the Bedfordshire Steam & Country Fayre at Old Warden (near Biggleswade) on 17th and 18th September 2005 where a visitor insisted that the restored ex-Folkestone Freighter on display was electrically powered. It wasn't until I removed the engine cover to show the SD petrol engine placed beside the driver that the visitor agreed that it was petrol driven.

Although magazines such as *Heritage Commercials* don't claim to be true history,



▲ Freighter engine and gearbox.

and are more in the nature of memoirs, I feel that contributors have a duty to take all reasonable steps to ensure accuracy in their writing. So far as Shelvoke & Drewry is concerned, I suggest that a look at [www.shelvoke-drewry.co.uk](http://www.shelvoke-drewry.co.uk) would have eliminated this error. As editor of that website I am always willing to look through any draft articles and offer my opinion on any corrections or clarifications required.

Brian Carpenter

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## AEC

### MERCURY



**1963, £7,500.** New to universal stores, 470 engine, 6 speed box, cab in tidy order, body has side doors on one side, two compartments, runs and drives and stops very well and has done many shows. Please call 07879 210001, West Yorkshire.

11342

## ALBION

### CLYDESDALE



**1963, £2,800.** Stirling, 400 engine, good runner, 10 speed road ranger gearbox, 2 speed diff and cab in good condition. Please call +61418 754109 or email leylandparts@bigpond.com, Australia.

12395

## ATKINSON

### VIEWLINER



**1969, £9,500.** Very rare model completely restored high spec working perfectly 1st class condition. Please call 07738 624109.

11222

## BEDFORD

### MK



**1980, £6,995.** Bedford MK 4WD with Atlas crane and rear hydraulic winch, new type and cab fitted and tyres like new. Please call 01534 852258, Jersey.

11632

### O TYPE



**1949, £3,750.** Tipper for restoration. Much work already carried out. Most parts here to complete winter Project. Too many other projects. Please call 07796 383375, Devon.

11210

### O TYPE



**1952, £9,500.** Tanker in excellent condition, ready to rally. Completely restored. Please call 07796 383375, Devon.

11209

### O TYPE



**1949, £11,000.** Excellent condition with thousands spent on extensive restoration, with receipts. Ready to rally, once sign written. Please call 07796 383375, Devon.

11211

## RL



**1956, £6,750 ono.** RYX378 is reluctantly for sale. Ex-AFS glider club tug, used seasonally and dry stored for the past 25 years, and now newly professionally refurbished and in exceptional condition. Excellent chassis and cab, 300 petrol engine with rebuilt carburettor, new fuel pump, regulator, full new braking system, actuators and linings, hub bearings, seals, bushes, exhaust, and much more. Please call 07971 964193.

11534

## TK



**1978/80, £11,000.** 4 x Bedford TK's for sale 2 ae 75% done i.e. all welding done to cabs, 3 x 4 cylinder, 1 x 6 cylinder plus lots of spare parts. Please call 07860 458590, Merseyside.

12571

## TL

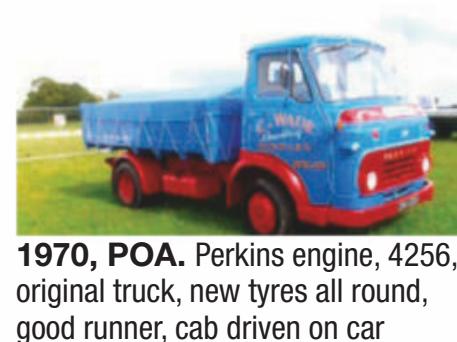


**1983, £5,500.** Hiab 650 double push and a nice 15ft recovery body, very clean tidy cab 5 speed gearbox and we fixed a Perkins engine run and drive perfect. Please call 07383 995422, West London.

11369

## COMMER

### KARRIER



**1970, POA.** Perkins engine, 4256, original truck, new tyres all round, good runner, cab driven on car license and V5 current. Please call 07977 109048, Lancashire.

11351

### KARRIER BANTAM



**1978, £3,750 Ono.** 5.5 ton tipper, Perkins diesel engine, dry stored for many years, larger 20 inch wheels, new to Saltash council. Good engine and running gear, cab needs attention, comes with spares, dry stored for many years. Please call 01458 860135, Somerset.

11063

## DIAMOND T

### 980



**1941, £7,500.** Number 9800123. Cummins 220 engine, winch and wrecker equipment. Was seen at Dorset Steam Fair. Please call 01993 772255, Oxon.

12381

## DODGE

### 613



**1983, £5,000 Ono.** MoT till October 2020, new tacho, good condition, work or play and beaver tail. Please call 01388 718302, Durham.

11775

## DODGE



**1949, 41,000 miles, £12,000.**  
Fitted with Perkins P6 engine.  
Just finished a bolt up restoration  
in excellent condition. Please call  
07801 442626, Cheshire.  
12621

## K SER

**1972, 32,711 miles, £7,000.**  
16 ton flat perking 6354 engine, the  
ca is in very good condition with  
full service docs. Please call 07759  
473380, Lincs.  
12754

## ERF



**£3,500.** Road ranger 9 speed  
gearbox, 26 foot long bed, hydraulic  
winch, Olympic bed and hydraulic  
winch, Olympic cab and good tyres  
all round. Please call 01793 740379,  
Wiltshire.  
11523

## GARDNER



**1971, £9,500 ONO.** David Brown  
gearbox with a 1968 32 ft single axle  
Scammell trailer. Please call 07968  
686798, Derbyshire.  
12411

## LV



**1971, POA.** 4 x 2 flatbed, Gardner  
180 engine, 6 speed David Brown  
gear box, 2 speed rear axle, power  
steering and full restoration 2015  
Please call 07979 366526, South  
Glos.  
11337

## FODEN

### FODEN

**2000, £3,500.** 6x4 flat high  
sleeper cab, crew bar, spec Cummins  
380 engine, one owner fume new,  
also 1972 king single axle low loader,  
20FT bed full out neck, £2,750.  
Please call 01754 880434, Lincs.  
12757

## H REG



**£6,000 Ono.** 6X6 350 Rolls-  
Royces engine, diff locks on each  
axle and gearbox. All new brakes,  
recon turbo, good tyres and 17ft box  
body. Hydraulic winch and all in good  
working order. Please call 07811  
814288, Devon.  
12329

## FORD

### A SERIES



**1982, £1,250.** 3.0 litre petrol  
spares or repair, ex 4WD ITN  
broadcast van starts and drives with  
no brakes and a small amount of  
welding. Please call 01527 852390,  
Warwickshire.  
12634

## THAMES TRADER



**£6,250.** 3 ton drop side 4D  
partly restored, chassis has been  
refurbished and painted, body has  
been rebuilt and painted, cab has  
been restored and painted and many  
new parts have been used but needs  
re-assembly. Please email hawk1td@  
talk21.com.  
11538

## THAMES TRADER



**1959, £12,500.** Artic comes with  
20ft taskers vacuum brakes trailer.  
Good all round condition and drives  
well. Please call 07930 191334.  
11582

## GUY

### INVINCIBLE



**1957, £20,000.** Draw bar model  
with Crane trailer, Gardner 6lw  
engine, David Brown 5 speed  
gearbox with booster 1-1.5 (50 mph),  
airbrakes, Willenhall cab and total  
rebuild 15 years ago. Please call  
078367 78777, North Yorkshire.  
10957

## ISUZU

### NKR 77 DI



**2002, 14,319 miles, £450.**  
Chassis cab, low mileage, very good  
cab, interior, engine and gearbox,  
failed MoT, brakes and steering box.  
Spares or repair. Please call 07713  
457897, Cornwall.  
10218

## IVECO

### 75E15



**1996, £1,200 Ono.** For parts or  
restoration, dry stored since 2012,  
6 cyl engine, with or without body.  
Please call 07825 013196, South  
Lanarkshire.  
12112

## LEYLAND

### BEAVER 12.B/1



**1952, 64,000 miles, £8,000.**  
X ray vehicle built, restored 2014  
by pyatts. Many jobs done since,  
strong 0600 engine, drives very well  
and ready to show. Well looked after  
and kept inside. Please call 07967  
489526.  
11881

## LEYLAND DAF 45-130



**1986, £1,600.** Tipper, a good little work horse on the button engine, brakes and all work, etc. Please call 07801 442626, Cheshire.

11110

## REDLINE FIRE TANKER



**1976, 34,000 Miles, £3,500.** Southampton registered, complete with 2000 gallon water pump and hoses. Ideal restoration project, runs and drives and needs clutch. Please call 0035387 9686655, Ireland.

11349

## MAN

### 16240



**1978, €20,000.** Day cab one or two remains. New clutch plate just fitted and 12 speed 2F box drives perfectly past featured in HC Kan 2009 issue No 229. Please call 0035387 2594032, Ireland.

11959

## MERCEDES

### 814 7.5 TON RACE TRUCK



**1994, 580,000 miles, £8,500.** sleeper cab, MoT August 2020, 5 berth, fridge, cooker, flush toilet, 6x4 metres gh awning, rear garage and can include silent Honda generator. Please call 07710 908190.

12713

## MORRIS

### DROPSIDE

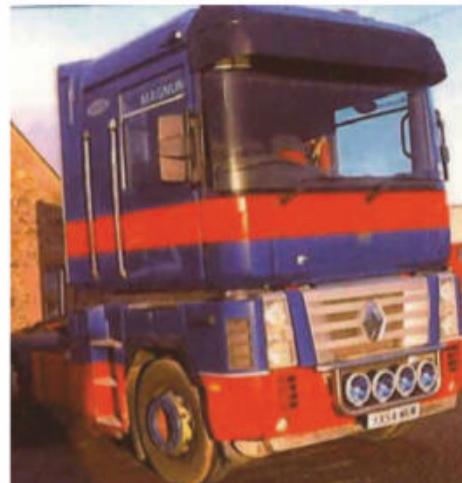


**1968, 38,300 miles, £9,500**  
**ONO.** Petrol dropside lorry. Refurbished including stainless steel exhaust downgraded. Please call 07736 68362, Essex.

12637

## RENAULT

### MAGNUM



**2005, £7,500.** 3 axle mid lift with slider and tipping gear. Mack 440-480 engine chipped to 500 HP. Great value at £7,500. Anything in part exchange. Please call 07860 237598, Aberdeen.

12521

## ROTINOFF

### ATLANTIC GR7



**1956, 10,000 miles, £POA.** The oldest surviving of this model of only three world wide. Rolls-Royce supercharged engine, synchro gearbox, power steering and many other spares. Please call 07931 377297, North Yorkshire.

11260

## SEDDON

### 16-4-470

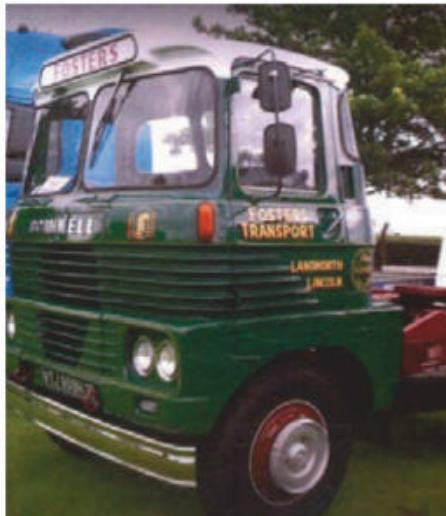


**1965, £POA.** Fitted with AEC engine and 6 speed gearbox, with a 23 foot body. Has had a recent professional repaint with easily removed vinyl lettering. In excellent condition throughout. Please call 07484 824036, West Yorkshire.

11073

## SCAMMELL

### HANDYMAN



**1970, £9,000.** Tested until Feb 2020 to shed space. Very good condition and ready to show. Please call 07774 005667, Lincolnshire.

12144

## OUNTAINEER

**15,000 miles, £POA.** Heavy duty winch, Leyland 680 engine and ready to rally. Please call 01293 871561 or 07860 657854, West Sussex.

11415

## SCANIA

### 143 STREAMLINE



**1995, £35,000.** Recently refurbished, Very good interior, Excellent example of a classic 3 series, MOT until October 2020. Reluctant Sale. No Time wasters. Topline, 420 6x2 Mid-lift. Please call 07767 600044, North Wales.

11765

### LB81



**1980, POA.** Breaking for spares, engine, gearbox and back axle all present and good. Cab completely rotten but all glass and many ancillary items present. Please call 07778 048770, Lincolnshire.

11364

## VOLVO

### F6 16



**1972, £5,000.** Accident damage, 5 passengers, side corners, working until June 2019, MoT out in June 2019. Engine, clutch, gearbox, took ABS, all very good condition. Please call 01827 880305, Warwicks.

12767

## FH12



**1998, £4,150.** Rare FH12 Mark 1 tag axle. Starts first time. New parts fitted. Original alloys. Chassis ready for shot blasting - Fuel tank, fifth wheel, side skirts and mudguards removed. Lack of time forces sale. Please call 07796 142654, Essex. 12739

## FH16 6X2



**1999, £9,750.** LHD, well maintained unit and recent new brakes, radiator and batteries. Alloy wheels with mich tyres, carries RDF reg number and truck runs very well. Please call 07831 384253, Powys. 12334

## FL10



**1993, POA.** 4 over 4 box, very good condition, new test, almost rebuilt by previous owner and owned by us since 2013. Please call 00353 861079629, Cavan Ireland. 11539

## WHITE

### ROAD COMMANDER 2



**1983, £35,000 ONO.** Very rare right hand drive totally rebuilt, cat engine, road ranger gearbox, original back axle, plated 31 tons, new tyres, new MoT and show ready for work. Please call 01252 400445, Surrey. 11645

## TRUCKS WANTED

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**Wanted.** Diesel with 5 speed box or just a 5 speed gear box and in good working order. Please call 01709 582898 or 07563 991341, Yorkshire. 12011

## TRAILERS

### DYSON TRAILER



**1940, £4,000 Ono.** Rebuilt dyson turntable trailer. As new tyres, new metal mudguards, original drawbar new flat, old style tailboard with original slipper. Fatteners rear dyson signee and original style lights. Please call 01995 61202 or 07909 792303, Lancs. 12732

### EARLY UNIGATE FRIDGE TRAILER



**£500.** Perfect for restoration. Please call 01832 710033, Huntingdon. 12615

### SCAMMELL SECTION



**£1,500.** Ex shell BP bitumen tank, classic Scammell product and ideal to go behind your MU or highwayman. Please call 01948 880870. 12085

## TINSLEY TANDEM AXLE TRAILER



**1988, £3,500.** 24 1/2ft long, 8ft 2 1/2 wide, on air twist locks, tyres, floor needs shall repair at front will be tested. Please call 01566 86824 or 07754 454239, Cornwall. 12735

## BODIES

### 20FT ALUMINIUM LORRY BODY



**£500.** Comes with tipping gear if required. Please call 07846 953404, Devon. 12459

### TRUCK ROME BODY



**£300.** In very good condition, highly used, 6ft 8ins wide and 12 ft 8 ins long. Please call 07801 442626, Cheshire. 12694

## PARTS

### 1430CC MED BLUEPRINTED ENGINE

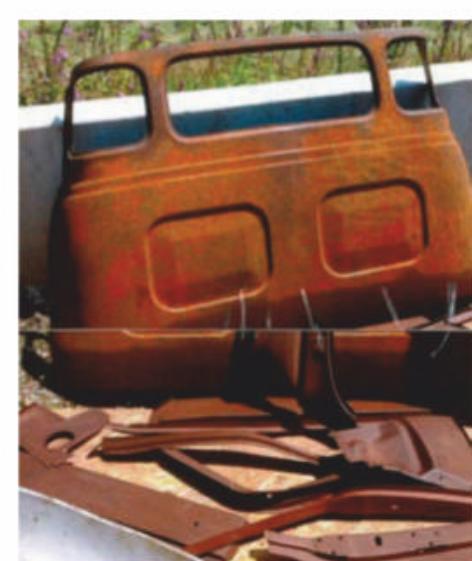
**£8,500 Ono.** Just reconditioned at Green and White, solid shell with many new parts including discs/4 pot callipers, gas shocks, s/c c/r gearbox, torque starter, alternator, hydraulic handbrake and many suspension bits. Please call 07917 450053. 12707

## ALISON AUTOMATIC GEARBOX FROM BEDFORD TK



**7,000 miles, £POA.** All works fine. Please call 07846 953404. 12458

## BEDFORD PARTS



**POA.** J type new old stock, rear cab panel, door posts plus other new panels. 1932 Bedford chevy gearbox. Please call 00353 2760230, Ireland. 11899

## CAB AND CAB PARTS

**£POA.** ERF E Series, Foden S80 - Foden Haulmaster - Foden 3000 Series. Dodge 50. Dodge High line. Ford Cargo, Leyland Road Runner, Leyland Freighter. Daf 45-55-60-65-75-85. Iveco ford translon cab shell. Please call 07774 799600. 12701

## ERF LV AND A SERIES

**£15-£20.** Original A series cab seat, £15. Rear axle suspension rocker beam bushes and parts, £20. 3 x interaxle prop shafts, £15. A number of cam brake slack adjusters, 7" brake shoes, grilling brake shoes, adjusters and parts. Please call 01538 266215, Staffs. 12727

## FODEN 4000 SERIES PARTS

**£30.** Steering mitre box, £30. 3 x u/j steering assemblies, £15 each. Steering column splined rod assembly, £20. 3 x hydraulic 2 speed 1300 axle half shafts, £25. 3 x 2 speed Eaton 1800 axle half shafts, £25 each. Please call 01538 266215, Staffs. 12725

## FODEN HAULMASTER PARTS

**£40-£50.** Power steering box and mounting bolts and drop arm, £50. Fuller 9 speed gearbox 11609, back plate assembly with range change, £50. Cummins L10 fuel pump, £50. 2 x 10 stud coned type steel super single wheels, £40. Please call 01538 266215, Staffs.  
12726

## LEYLAND REAR BRAKE SHOES

**POA.** With new linings. Please call 02083 974276, Surey.  
12644

## LEYLAND SCAMMELL PARTS

**£5-£50.** 14x680 injectors need servicing, £5. 2 x 10 stud spigot type super single wheels, £20 each. Land Rover series 2 front axle, drag link, brake shoes and drums, £40. CAV alternator reversible rotation, £50. Please call 01538 266215, Staffs.  
12728

## SEDDON ATKINSON STRATO T3 PARTS



**£20-£100.** N/S door, £100. Side wicker doors, £20. Also various other parts. Please call 07793 221001, West Yorkshire.  
12721

## TWO BEDFORD REAR SEATS



**£90.** Please call 07934 082026, Waltham Abbey, Essex.  
12668

## TWO LEYLAND 600 ENGINES

**£875.** Both in running order and complete. Please call 01524 241994, N Lancashire.  
12660

## TWO USED EMINOX EXHAUSTS



**£300 each or £500 the pair.** Exhausts were fitted to Leyland Constructor 240. Good used condition. Please call 07990 790957.  
12708

## VARIOUS PARTS

**£350.** 2 front springs for L.A.D or ERGO cab CD21 or CD65. Please call 01706 229845, Lancashire.  
12086

## VARIOUS PARTS

**£150-£250.** Bedford Tk windscreens in good condition, £150. Bedford 200 diesel engine in parts but complete, £250. Please call 07802 695218, Bucks.  
12653

## VOLVO P 1800'S BOX OF PARTS



**POA.** Speedo, brake pads, rear no plate unit dynamo, hub cap beam unit exhaust trims. Please call 07916 797613.  
12662

## WELDING AND COMPRESSOR



**POA.** Oxy/acetylene Welding kit mid size bottles, gauges new hoses gun, blow back, trolley, large air tank, Comp motor and pump, wall mount retractable air hose. Please call 07916 797613.  
12661

## PARTS WANTED

### LEYLAND DAF BRAKE MASTER CYLINDER

**Wanted.** Brake master cylinder LDV serpa van. Please call 07710 157760, Surrey.  
12655

### SMILEY EXHAUST MANIFOLD



**Wanted.** Exhaust manifold for a 1997 Diesel Smiley Transit, model 80 as per photograph. Please note, Not the Banana-top engine. Please email thomasmuir50@hotmail.com.  
12618

## VARIOUS PARTS

**Wanted.** 5 speed gearbox from TK or TL for a 220 diesel and J type project. Please call 07802 695218, Bucks.  
12652

## MISCELLANEOUS

### 2 DIE CAST CORGI CLASSICS 8 WHEELER TRUCKS



**£30.** Atkinson 8 wheeler rigid Lucozade with crate load. Limited edition with certificate and unpainted figures. Leyland 8 wheeler rigid Codonas pleasure fairs. Limited edition with certificate and cardboard Kiosk. Both mint and boxed never played with. Please call 01744 637052, Merseyside.  
12608

### 3 CORGI DIE CAST MODELS



**£30.** Volvo artic + Ford Cargo truck + Leyland van. Weetabix decals all mint and boxed. Please call 01744 637052, Merseyside.  
12607

## DIE-CAST MODELS

**£10-£20.** Kingsize Bedford TM cement mixer, £12. K-S Scammell scranes (yellow), £20. K-S Scammell crane (orange), £15. Yesteryear Atkinson steam wagon, £10. Kingsize Massey combine, £20. Bedford CA Dunlop van, £15. Dodge horse box artic K-S, £12. Please call 07784 373469, Suffolk.  
11864

## KRUPP CRANE



**POA.** Extends out to 36 inches and weights 2.2 kilos the model was manufactured in Germany. Please call 077042 50258, Staffs.  
12675

## REGISTRATION NUMBERS

**£15,000 ONO.** EDY 14 on retention, taken off a 1949 Ford Prefect by present owner 45 years ago and used ever since. Please call 01406 426361, Lincolnshire.  
12102

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## WEST LOTHIAN CLASSIC

The town of Bathgate in West Lothian has been associated with commercial transport for many years. Enthusiast Dave Sibbald, has recently taken a step back in time and restored a 1930s Ford Model A, writes Bob Weir.



## REMEMBERING BORGWARD



Even at a young age Altona Carl F.W Borgward's understanding of mechanics thrived. As a small child while his sisters played with dolls, Carl Borgward constructed little clockwork toy cars. It therefore came as no surprise to his parents when their son declared that he wanted to be an engineer; but he would go on to surpass all expectations when he eventually headed up a major German automotive company that bore his name, writes Patrick Boniface.

## MILITANT - PART THREE



As Mike and Julie Blenkinsop venture into part three of the AEC Militant history, we look at more of the enthusiasts and their dedicated efforts to preserve these fine lorries.

**NEXT ISSUE: FREE HERITAGE COMMERCIALS POSTER!**

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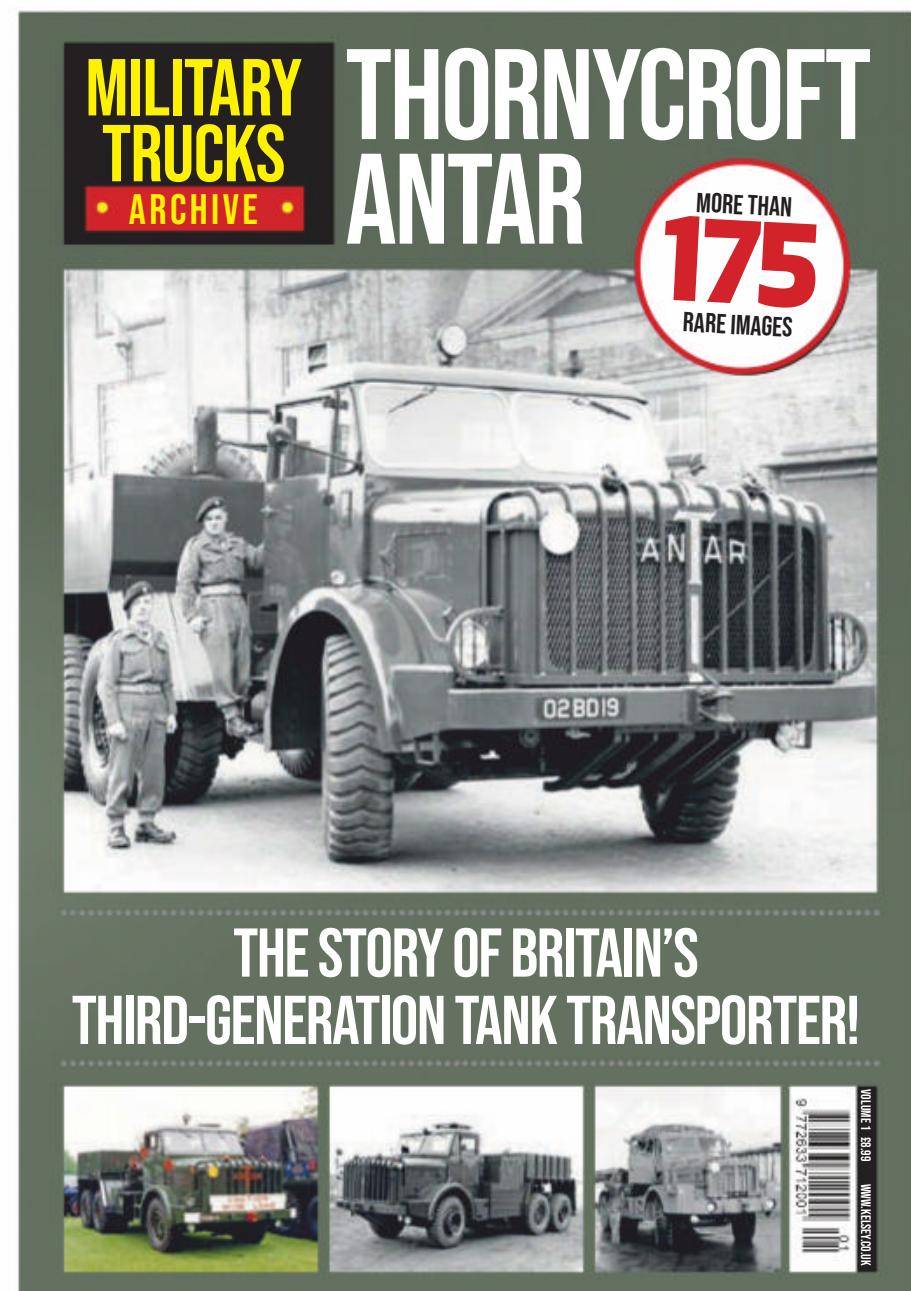
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